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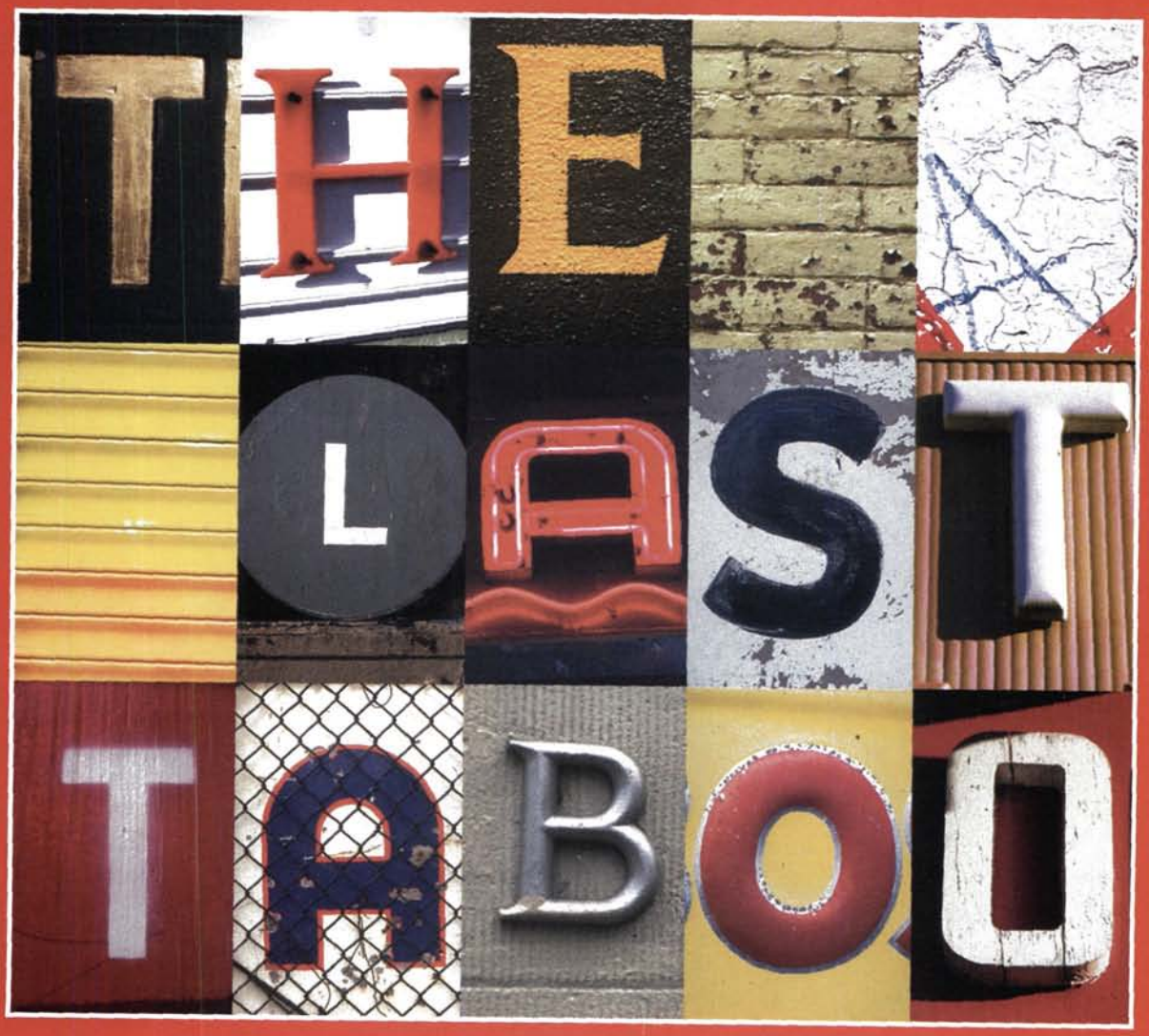

Politicians keep saying we should inject more religion into our public life. But what we really need is a healthy dose of atheism.

BY WENDY KAMINER

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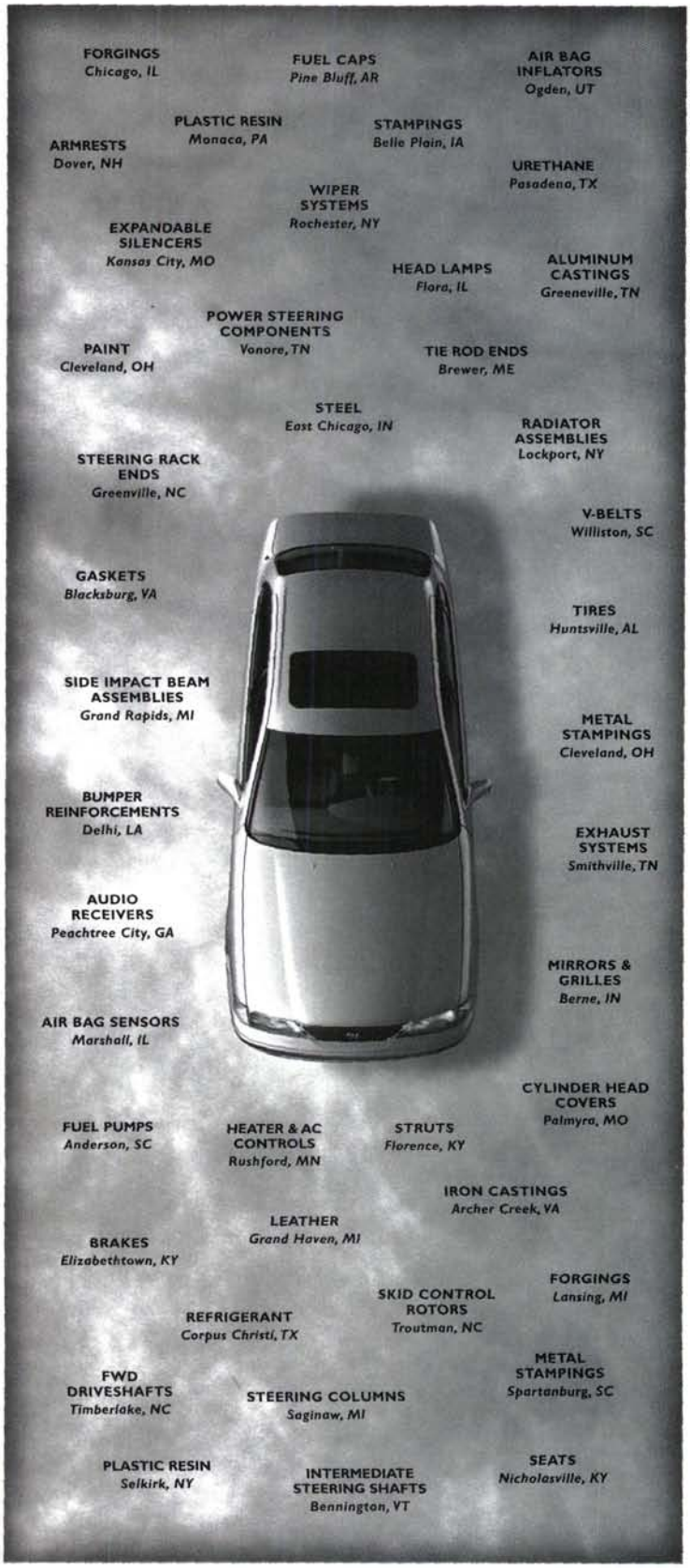

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 14, 1996

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,265

PO Box 111
Big Sandy, TX 75755

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 215, Number 16, Issue 4,265, October 14, 1996. (Printed in the U.S. on September 25, 1996.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 15 & 22, Aug. 19 & 26, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1996) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1996 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Smeared

To the editors:

The U.S. Taxpayers Party convention which Michael Lewis described in your September 9 edition ("Howard's End") bears no resemblance to the one which actually took place.

In case your readers are interested, our convention was attended by more than 600 registered guests, with delegates from each of the fifty states plus D.C.

Platform witnesses and convention speakers included Marshall Foster of the Mayflower Institute, Dennis Peacocke of Strategic Christian Services, former presidential candidate Alan Keyes, Home School Legal Defense Association President Michael Farris, American Life League President Judie Brown, author George Grant, tax expert Dan Pilla, economic strategist Peter Ferrara, and about three dozen others.

For the record, my friend Congressman Bob Dornan was never listed as a confirmed speaker but had indicated tentatively that he might be on hand.

Lewis's condescending attack on Charles Collins and his supporters was gratuitous and insulting, to say the least. A casual reader could assume from the Forbes/Lewis story that Collins and his associates constituted a dominant presence in San Diego, using TNR's odious characterization of them as a brush with which to smear and discredit thousands of good people all over America who labored hard and sacrificially to make the USTP convention a success. In the final balloting I received 396¾ votes; Collins received 20¼.

HOWARD PHILLIPS
U.S. Taxpayers Party
Vienna, Virginia

Dreamers

To the editors:

If, as Matthew Miller says in "The Big Ten" (September 9), the U.S. needs nearly 5 million new cops and concurrently must find public-sector jobs for 4 million welfare moms, the solution is obvious: deputize the welfare moms *in situ*. Consider the positive implications: at one stroke we would vastly increase the police presence in exactly the neighborhoods that need it most. Overnight a significant fraction of America's jail population would be the children of police officers, with all that entails for prison conditions. PBA-mandated medical benefits and training regimens would dramatically improve the health of one of our least healthy populations. The young inner-city male's worst nightmare: a matriarch with a badge. Talk about diversity on the force.... Like the rest of Miller's ideas, this one doesn't score many points in terms of political feasibility. But in terms of government providing useful work to welfare moms, it doesn't get more useful than this.

DENNIS P. WATERS
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

To the editors:

Matthew Miller's "The Big Ten" was an interesting if impossibly utopian critique of U.S. spending priorities. Of course our allocation of resources is not optimal, but I take issue with my profession being singled out for cost savings. Miller makes only two specific proposals for saving money: cut defense spending by $40 billion and cut physicians' salaries. After all, he argues, "doctors here earn much more than in other countries," which apparently we do not deserve.

Let's apply Miller's country comparison to the legal profession. Japan seems to function quite well with only 5,000 lawyers in contrast to more than 800,000 U.S. attorneys. Surely we have a huge surplus of legal talent. Since we have a population twice the size of Japan, we could probably get by with twice as many lawyers (10,000). Since we seem to like them so much, and there may be certain legal emergencies which require more attorneys, let's say we need 20,000. This leaves a surplus of 780,000. If each of these lawyers earns $50,000 a year (a laughably low estimate) the GDP savings for ending these careers is $39 billion.

Let's look at another side of the argument: What is the value of the services provided by physicians? I cannot assign an accurate dollar amount to my profession, but I can tell you what I do. Last week on my mammography day, two of the patients that I saw complained of worrisome lumps. In one case we diagnosed a benign breast cyst and reassured the woman that she did not have cancer. In the second case, we discovered mammographic findings that were suspicious and immediately referred her to a surgeon for removal of what turned out to be a cancer. The next day, while covering the emergency room of our inter-city hospital (where Miller may be interested to learn we earn $0.13 for every dollar of service rendered), I diagnosed a previously unsuspected broken neck, possibly preventing paralysis. These cases are not atypical; they are our daily work. No tax lawyer, patent lawyer or personal injury lawyer can claim that their profession has the same importance and impact on their clients' lives as what we do every day.

The average pediatrician makes a little more than $100,000 a year. Shaquille O'Neill just signed a contract worth over $100,000,000. While watching Shaq play basketball is a pleasant diversion on a Sunday afternoon, who do you call at 3:00 a.m. when your child can hardly breathe?

Being a doctor is an incredibly satisfying profession because of the trust put in us by our patients and our great responsibility to provide the best care possible. Morale is awful, though, because we see administrators and businessmen growing rich on the backs of patients and their doctors. Managed care and the corporate takeover of medicine has already resulted in pay cuts for many of us, with more salary reductions and increased workload predicted for the future. Now Matthew Miller is going to cut our pay even more? No thanks. Try cutting that $300 billion tab for corporate welfare by 100 percent instead of a measly one third. I will be happy to loan him a scalpel.

STEFAN TIGGES
Atlanta, Georgia

To the editors:

As a counselor in the Philadelphia public schools, nothing would please or benefit me more than plenty of money for education and crime prevention (we do that, too). Missing in Matthew Miller's formulation, however, is any mention of the whole issue of values. Nor, apparently, is Miller concerned about the consequences of the failure of his social welfare program. The expenditure of 30 percent of our gross domestic product (GDP) could bankrupt this country. If his program fails, what percent of our GDP do we spend cleaning it up?

"Once we're serious," according to Miller, "salvation is just a dime on the dollar away." But what do we get? "Safe streets, schools that work and technology-led growth; everyone at work who's able, at a living wage with health care, in cities that gleam."

It's hard to imagine such a scenario without a fundamental change in values both on the part of recipients and the providers. The sorry history of New Deal and the Great Society programs in spite of massive public works expenditures has led to the very crisis of faith that we are experiencing today. People do not believe that these approaches work anymore.

Why? What's missing? I'll hazard two variables. Public assurance that the will to work will overcome the inertia caused by government largess. The stimulus to succeed in spite of public inequality and social adversity. The success or failure of Miller's formulation depends upon these two factors.

EUGENE A. FITZGERALD
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Turf wars

To the editors:

Your Notebook item (September 16 & 23) missed the greatest irony in Judge Garrity's decision concerning admission to Boston's elite public "exam schools." While striking down ethnic quotas, he also required the city to come up with a new system to keep the schools from becoming predominantly white. Only he didn't say "predominantly white." He said "predominantly white and Asian." We now need affirmative action to protect some minorities from other minorities.

ROGER SWEENY
Norwood, Massachusetts

Calm down

To the editors:

Your September 16 & 23 Notebook item on President Clinton's 100,000 police on the streets program misleads.

The administration's goal of adding these 100,000 officers is part of a six-year plan contained in the 1994 Crime Act. In less than two years, funding has been provided to local communities to hire and redeploy more than 44,000 of these officers.

But police hiring does not happen overnight, unless you want unqualified and undertrained officers. It can take over a year for a police agency to recruit, hire and train a new officer—and this is after the funding has been provided. The local agencies that are taking advantage of this funding (over 9,000 of them to date) are hiring and training as quickly as their existing resources allow them. We are extremely pleased that nearly 20,000 of these officers are already working on the streets of their communities.

This program is an unqualified success, and it is well ahead of schedule. It has been supported by every major law enforcement organization in the country. I can assure you that the goals of this program will be met. Meanwhile, I would suggest you talk to my colleagues in the law enforcement community who see this as not only a serious goal, but essential when it comes to supporting public safety.

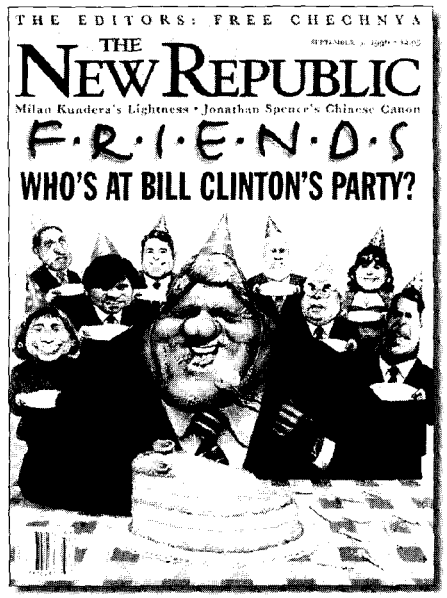
JOSEPH E. BRANN
Director, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services,
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Pop schlock

To the editors:

Josh Young's denunciation of "film criticism" ("Thumbs Down," September 9) would have been more convincing if he had made some distinction between mainstream and non-mainstream movie reviews. There is no way that the film "criticism" that we get in newspapers, popular magazines and TV is going to change; the pressures of the marketplace are too irresistible. As a case in point, I once counted ten full-page ads for movies in the Arts and Leisure section of the Sunday *New York Times* and assumed that this blitz must have brought in at least a million dollars in revenue to the *Times*. Is it any wonder that the features in Arts and Leisure concentrate more on promoting Hollywood schlock than critiquing it honestly?

It seems a waste of time for Young to focus his critique on mainstream criticism and to be upset by pop reviewers allowing themselves to be soundbited in ads. Sure-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ly he must realize that those genuinely interested in film art turn to the intellectual journals and the alternative newspapers for truly independent movie reviewing. In Washington, D.C. the only honest film criticism in town can be found in *City Paper*, a non-mainstream alternative to the mainstream advertising-drenched *Washington Post*. So far as I know, no film critic at *City Paper* has ever been asked to allow himself to be quoted in an ad for a Hollywood commercial film.

BURLING LOWREY
Washington, D.C.

Smoke this

To the editors:

Your assessment of the Republican spin on the White House's tobacco initiatives (Notebook, September 16 & 23) seems basically on target. But I was astonished to find you asserting that "Clinton's past marijuana use ... consisted of a single unconsummated toke." Does anyone still believe this? Four years ago, you called Clinton's infamous "didn't inhale" evasion the least believable quote of the '92 election. Surely anyone who would take Clinton at his word on this issue has been party to a great many tokes, all of them happily consummated.

ADDISON F. GOLLADAY
Brooklyn, New York

Straight poll

To the editors:

Anna Husarska ("Bite the Ballot," September 9) suggested that the United States Information Agency conducts polls in Bosnia to publicize results designed to bolster President Clinton's reelection bid. Citing polls that show Bosnian Muslims think that the elections will be free and fair, Husarska strongly suggests that such polls are not only inaccurate, but deliberately so.

Furthermore, she quotes a professor from Sarajevo University who allegedly questions the accuracy of USIA polls. Would Husarska be interested to know that the professor she quotes conducted USIA's first two surveys of Bosnian Muslims? Would she be surprised to learn that all three USIA surveys (including the two conducted by Professor Nuhic) reported similar findings on Bosnian Muslim attitudes on the elections?

I want to set the record straight on the reasons why USIA does public opinion polling abroad: USIA's mission directs the agency to gather foreign public opinion on issues related to U.S. foreign policy for the president and other policymakers. The expectation is that the information will help inform decisions.

USIA polls in some fifty countries each year. We report all results—both positive and negative. The data are never shaded to present a particular point of view.

ANN T. PINCUS
Director, Office of Research and Media Reaction, United States Information Agency
Washington, D.C.

Hands down

To the editors:

I was startled to learn that, at the president's recent 50th birthday bash, David Samuels observed "the horn-rimmed Young Democrat in front of [him] put[ting] a discrete hand up the dress of his date" ("Birthday Boy," September 9).

Good heavens. Was it his own? Sounds to me like a matter for the authorities.... Or perhaps Samuels should merely have been more discreet in his criticism.

ERIC M. WESTBY
Boston, Massachusetts

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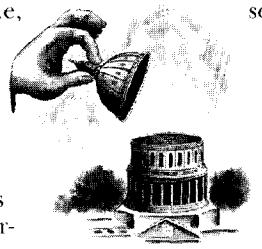
FROM WASHINGTON

Sex games

For those of us who think the affirmative action wars should be settled at the ballot box rather than in the courts, this is supposed to be the moment of truth. In little more than a month, the people of California will vote on a constitutional initiative that would bar the state from discriminating, or granting preferences, based on race or sex, in public employment, education or contracting. And, on September 18, the House Small Business Committee held hearings on a bill that would repeal the mother of all federal affirmative action programs, the 8(a) program, which last year set aside about $5.8 billion in federal contracts for small businesses owned by certain minorities. Unfortunately, opponents of both proposals have managed to avoid a debate on the merits of affirmative action for minorities by playing on the fears of a politically powerful majority: women.

At the House hearing last week, I was flattered to be invited to testify about the constitutionality of the 8(a) program, in light of the Supreme Court's *Adarand* decision. Alas, the proceedings didn't quite live up to the Madisonian ideal. The Democrats yelled at the Republicans. The members yelled at the witnesses. Representative Maxine Waters of California yelled at everyone, including the spectators. And the debate itself was literally one-sided. In the morning, seven Republicans showed up to profess their ambivalence about the bill, while fourteen Democrats declared themselves unalterably opposed. After the noon recess, the Republicans fled the hearing room, leaving the right side of the bench entirely empty. The bill's grandmotherly sponsor, Chairwoman Jan Meyers of Kansas, sputtered at her colleagues' betrayal, but in the movement to end, not mend, affirmative action, she, like Custer, was left to stand alone.



Rather than end small business set-asides, Democrats and Republicans fell all over themselves to extend them—to women. During the 1980s, the Small Business Administration rejected petitions to add women, along with Hasidic Jews, disabled veterans and Iranians, to the list of groups eligible for set-asides, while bowing to the more effective lobbying of Asian Indians, Tongans, Sri Lankans and Indonesians. Pressed by both Meyers and the Democrats to correct this shameful example of patriarchal hegemony, Philip Lader, the head of the SBA, announced that the Clinton Justice Department would soon propose changes to "facilitate women's entry into the 8(a) program." In fact, the Clinton changes would make it easier for *all* individuals left off the list of presumptively eligible groups, not only women, to prove that they are victims of "social disadvantage." But Lader, like his questioners, was eager to avoid a debate about class by focusing on gender.

Emboldened by the shifting political tides, Democratic defenders of the 8(a) program refused to engage the logic of recent judicial decisions. Since July, three federal courts have held that a set-aside program for *sub-contractors* is not an appropriately narrow remedy, even if the state has a history of discrimination in awarding *prime* contracts. Confronted with these decisions, Representative James Clyburn noted that "the Confederate battle flag" still flies over the South Carolina State House, and "that makes a statement for me." But courts have refused to accept general evidence of "societal discrimination" to justify contracting set-asides.

While there is little chance Meyers's bill will pass, the California Civil Rights Initiative is another matter. According to a *Los Angeles Times* poll, 60 percent of likely voters favor CCRI; 25 percent oppose it. But as in Congress, the debate over CCRI ha degenerated into an irrelevant sideshov about justice for women.

CCRI contains two clauses that mentior sex discrimination. The first, clause (a), says that: "The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." The second, clause (c), says that "Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as prohibiting bona fide qualifications based on sex which are reasonably necessary to the normal operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

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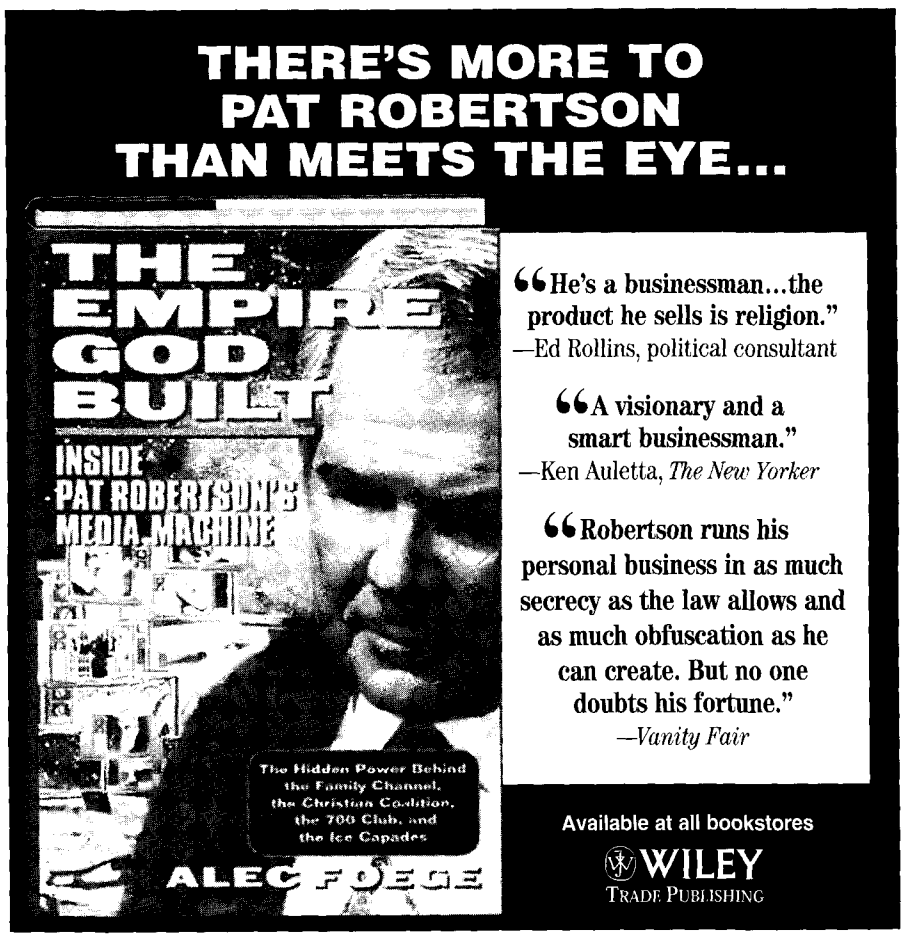
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 14, 1996

PUTTING PARTIES FIRST

Few politicians have less claim to the protections of democratic principle than Ross Perot, who has done everything in his power to quash dissent within the fiefdom he calls the Reform Party. And we doubt Perot's challenge to his exclusion from the presidential debates has much basis in law, as opposed to politics.

But Perot is not the point. Thirty years ago, the exclusion might have made sense. From 1928 to 1964, third party or independent candidates had little or no effect on the outcome of presidential elections. Since then, however, such bids have routinely influenced the way presidents are selected. In three of the last seven elections (1968, 1980 and 1992), third party and independent candidates compelled Democratic and Republican nominees to discuss issues they would rather have avoided—from busing and racial segregation to foreign trade and K Street lobbying to entitlements and the budget deficit. By recommending Perot's exclusion this year, the Commission on Presidential Debates is stifling discussion and suppressing a political evolution that will strengthen American democracy.

Though the commission merely offers recommendations to the candidates, its suggestions have generally been followed in recent years because of its reputation for impartiality. As its decision on Perot reveals, that reputation is entirely undeserved. Democrats and Republicans set up the commission in 1987 to wrest the debates from the non-partisan League of Women Voters. In its first press conference, Democratic National Committee Chairman Paul Kirk Jr. and Republican National Committee Chairman Frank Fahrenkopf declared their intention to exclude third parties. In 1992, they were forced by public opinion to allow Perot to debate, but last fall, one month after Perot announced the Reform Party's formation, Kirk and Fahrenkopf announced new criteria that virtually preordained the exclusion of Perot, or any other conceivable challenger to the two party system.

According to the commission, a candidate must have a "realistic chance" of being elected. To have a realistic chance, he or she not only needs the money, organization and ballot access to contend, but must also be within striking distance of the front-runner in public opinion polls and pundit surveys (one of the stranger aspects of the commission's deliberation is the way it has consecrated polls and punditry as an official part of the democratic process). On the first test, Kirk and Fahrenkopf gave Perot a partial fail (they criticized him for limiting himself to $30 million in federal matching funds!), but the decisive criteria was the second: a month and a half before November, barely anyone thinks he can win.

That definition would have ruled out every third party or independent challenge this century except for Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. If applied to Democratic and Republican candidates, it would have knocked out Taft in 1912, Smith in 1928, Dewey in 1944, Stevenson in 1956, Goldwater in 1964, McGovern in 1972 and Mondale in 1984. At the equivalent point in their campaigns, it might also have precluded Truman in 1948 and Ford in 1976. For that matter, it could rule out Dole in 1996.

There is a better standard. A candidate should have the money, organization and ballot access necessary to run a national campaign. And he or she should be in a position to influence the final result—whether by winning outright or by tipping the balance in several states or in a region. By these criteria, George Wallace would have qualified in 1968; so would Anderson in 1980 and Perot in 1992 (when he delivered to Clinton several Western states Clinton couldn't have won on his own) and 1996. Barry Commoner and the Citizen Party would not have qualified in 1980, and Ralph Nader and Libertarian candidate Harry Browne would not make it in 1996.

Perot's exclusion this year could, of course, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If he can't participate in the debates, Perot may not win enough votes to affect the outcome in any state. And that will in turn become evidence against allowing independents and third party candidates to participate next time. But the spectacle of Democratic and Republican bosses conspiring to ensure their parties' hegemony will only fuel the alienation and paranoia that reveals itself in support for people like Ross Perot. At a time when their hold on public loyalty seems to be declining ever further, it is a grave mistake to confuse accountability to the two established parties with accountability to the electorate. The legitimacy of the Commission on Presidential Debates is based entirely on this fiction. It should be abolished. •

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NOTEBOOK

OLD HANDS: The House Ethics Committee has dreamed up yet another scheme to keep the month-old independent counsel's report on Newt Gingrich's ethics allegations under wraps. Chairwoman Nancy Johnson released the findings only to a four-member subcommittee, insisting she will make them public when the report is "complete." (Translation: when the election is "complete.") Technically, the report can be kept out of view until the subcommittee recommends a course of action. But that rule has been waived before. In 1989, Republicans insisted on seeing an outside counsel's report on ethics charges against then-Speaker Jim Wright, paving the way for Wright's resignation. One congressman was especially insistent: "I think it's vital that we establish as a Congress our commitment to publish that report and to release those documents so the country can judge whether or not the man second in line to be president—the Speaker of the House—should be in that position." That congressman was Newt Gingrich.

SIGN AWAY: Last week, President Clinton, in what has become a trademark innovation, criticized legislation as he was signing it. This disassociation of words from action, a disassociation in whose service Bill Clinton has spent much of his presidency, presumably relieves him of responsibility for the consequences of his signature—in this case, responsibility for a defense bill that authorizes $11.2 billion more in military spending at a time of supposed general belt tightening. What do we get for all this money? Seawolf submarines and F-22 fighters, pork treats that a new generation of weapons will soon render as obsolete as Atari. If fully funded, the extra treats that the president has embraced and not embraced will almost exactly cancel out the savings from the last bill President Clinton signed and trashed: welfare reform.

CORRECTION: *On October 3, 1994,* THE NEW REPUBLIC *published a two-part cover story dealing with Cuba. The second of those articles appeared under the cover page title of "Clinton's Miami Mobster" and was about Cuban exile leader Jorge Mas Canosa. The use of the word "mobster" was the sole responsibility of* THE NEW REPUBLIC *and not the author.* THE NEW REPUBLIC *did not intend to imply that Mr. Mas has been involved in any criminal activity.* THE NEW REPUBLIC *did not intend to accuse Mr. Mas of being in any way connected to, or engaged in, criminal activity of any kind, nor was its use of the word based on any evidence of criminal activity on Mr. Mas' part. Nothing in the article by Ann Louise Bardach stated or should be interpreted as stating or suggesting that Mr. Mas was involved in criminal activity.* THE NEW REPUBLIC *regrets any injury or embarrassment that may have been caused to Mr. Mas or his family.*

* * *

Although we regret our wording of the title, which was chosen without the participation of the author, Ann Louise Bardach, THE NEW REPUBLIC stands fully behind the article itself. Nothing in the thought-provoking article, which addresses America's Cuba policy and the political influence of elements of the Cuban exile community in Miami, requires clarification, correction or apology as nothing in it has been proven false or libelous. Ms. Bardach, who is a Contributing Editor of *Vanity Fair* and winner of the 1995 PEN West Award for Journalism, will be dismissed from the libel lawsuit independent of THE NEW REPUBLIC's settlement. •

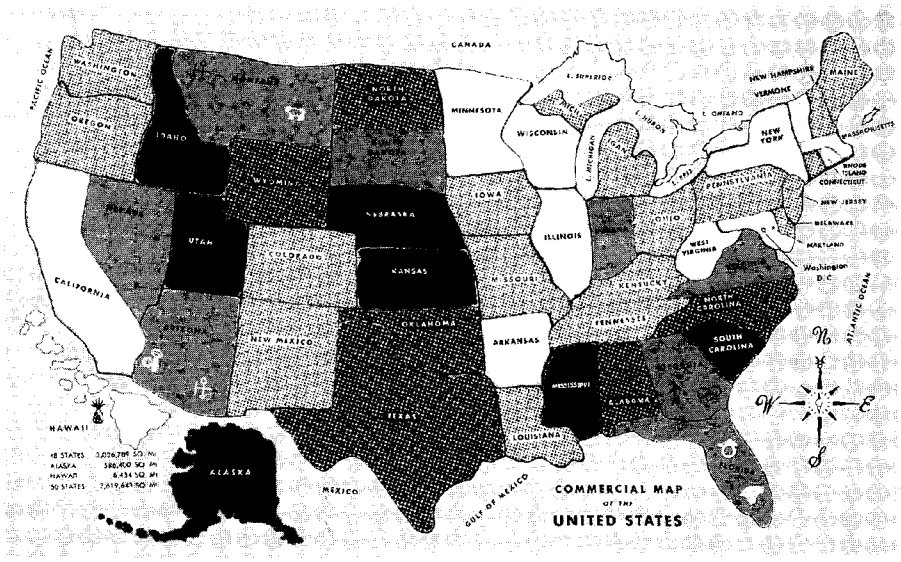
Weekly Electoral Vote Estimate

As of 9/20/96

by Hal Bruno, ABC News Political Director

(538 Total Votes, 270 Required for Election)

Clinton=350 Even=81 Dole=107



Clinton Strong
Clinton Ahead
Close/Even
Dole Strong
Dole Ahead

Weekly estimates are not scientific, but the result of a compilation of interviews and local polling.

Map modified for TNR by Jane Holloway

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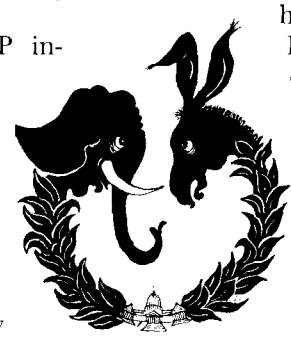
RACE FOR THE SENATE: IDAHO

UNDEAD

By Chris Farnsworth

Larry Craig has seen better days. A year ago, Idaho's senior senator planned to phone in his re-election campaign. He was *the* Republican in a devoutly Republican state, at a time when his party ruled Washington. His campaign war chest was brimming. And his opponent was a total unknown.

But a lot can happen in twelve months. Now, Craig's party is in disarray, and his opponent—Walt Minnick, a former timber company executive who bears a strong resemblance to Mr. Rogers—has cut Craig's twenty-five-point lead in half, according to Lake Research, Minnick's polling firm. Only four in ten voters say they want Craig re-elected.



Larry Craig is one of the many GOP incumbents feeling the sting of this year's Democratic revival. It's a revival due not only to the GOP's budget disaster last winter, but to the mission of Bob Kerrey, the chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, to recruit a half-dozen "unconventional" candidates who could challenge Republican incumbents. To retake seats in the South and West, Kerrey handpicked candidates who share few or none of the beliefs of the party's liberal base. And, in this rather Clintonian scheme to revive the Democratic Party by remaking it beyond recognition, Walt Minnick is exhibit A.

Idaho's politics usually lack suspense: Republicans win and Democrats get slaughtered. In 1994, the Democrats lost their only congressman, Larry LaRocco, to a minor scandal. He was replaced by Helen Chenoweth, best known for defending militias and issuing code reds about black helicopters. Only one Democrat won statewide office that year, and Idaho's legislature became the most Republican in the nation, with only twenty-one Democrats for 105 seats.

The foundation for that trouncing was laid by GOP mainstays like Larry Craig. For sixteen years, Craig has faithfully carried Idaho's message of a balanced budget and term limits back to Congress. He usually doubles the votes of his nearest challenger, and in 1990 he won his Senate seat with a cool 20 percent margin of victory. Earlier this year, when Trent Lott—Craig's sometime singing partner in a barbershop quartet called "The Vocal Majority"—became Majority Leader, Craig was elected chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, fourth in the leadership hierarchy.

Faced with Craig's winning populist conservatism, Minnick is doing him one better. When Craig supported the Republican plan to balance the budget in seven years, Minnick said he could do it in one. When Craig talked about electoral reforms, Minnick ran TV ads hammering Craig's vote to raise congressional salaries and promised to take a pay cut every year the budget is in deficit. "We are driving down the same tracks Larry Craig and the Republicans spent decades laying," Minnick's press secretary, Bill Broadhead, cheerfully admits.

Minnick is comfortable with Republican themes because, for much of his life, he was a Republican. He has the kind of résumé some GOP freshmen have been caught inventing: Pentagon analyst in Vietnam, a stint as a domestic policy adviser in the Nixon White House (not even Nixon taints Minnick; he resigned in protest after the Saturday Night Massacre) and then success in the private sector. As president and CEO of TJ International, he more than tripled revenues of the timber company before retiring in early 1995.

Though he's now on their ticket, Minnick hasn't exactly embraced his new party—and especially not its leader. Idaho is the state where Bill Clinton nearly lost the popular vote to Ross Perot and where four huge billboards of the president hugging Larry EchoHawk, the Democratic candidate for governor in '94, were enough to sink him. Accordingly, Minnick's triangulation makes Clinton look like a remedial geometry student. Minnick announced early he would not invite Clinton to Idaho and declined to attend the Democratic National Convention. When Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle mentioned the Democrats "taking back the Senate" at a Boise fund-raiser, Minnick warned him: "Careful there, Tom. That's what my Republican friends are afraid of." Minnick is also the first Democratic candidate in years not to receive labor's endorsement, largely because of his support for Idaho's right-to-work law a decade ago, which crippled unions in the state by outlawing closed shops.

Minnick even refuses to call himself a Democrat. Instead, he created the term "independent running on the Democratic ticket," a wordy coinage that the state GOP openly mocks. Yet, despite his public aloofness, Minnick's campaign has resurrected Idaho's Democratic Party. After the 1994 rout some state Republicans predicted Idaho's Democrats would go the way of the Progressives and Whigs. Minnick's campaign has since raised $300,000 for the state party and undertaken an aggressive voter registration drive. "We've registered at least 25,000 voters, and I'd say that's a conservative estimate," says Karen White, Minnick's campaign manager.

Minnick's strategy—and the Idaho Democrats' new mission—is to paint Craig as a slave to PAC contributors and the extreme right wing. "Larry Craig for them, Walt Minnick for us" is his slogan. Minnick's greatest asset is Craig himself, who, despite twenty years of service

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to the state, remains a cipher. Craig doesn't like talking about himself and can get surly when challenged. In a radio appearance with local students earlier this year, the senator barked at a high-school senior for challenging his opposition to a minimum wage increase. "Scrape off that media training and the old Larry Craig comes out," says Broadhead. "He makes Bob Dole look like a nice guy."

After the Lake Research poll, Craig's campaign tried its own strategy of extremes. It began running TV ads showing photos of Minnick and Clinton side by side. Craig came up with the third slogan of his campaign. Now he's "always one of us, always fighting for Idaho." And he's backed away from the fringes: "He's consistently supported a balanced approach of compromise and bringing together polarized factions," says Mike Tracy, Craig's press secretary. "There is always a chance we won't win. But we're going to fight hard."

Tracy's moment of pessimism aside, there is still a lot standing between Minnick and a Senate seat. Idaho is one of the few states where high voter turnout favors the GOP, and the Idaho Republican Party's get-out-the-vote effort has outspent the Democrats' by at least five to one. And Craig has one other overriding factor on his side: fear. Minnick expected many of his business friends to contribute to his effort and, so far, few have. Idaho is still a place small enough that the phrase "You'll never work in this town again" means something. If Craig wins—and most people still believe he will—those who defected to Minnick's side might live to regret it.

But that kind of partisan hostility is exactly why Minnick has a chance. "There are a lot of people in the state who would identify themselves as Republicans, but not necessarily Idaho Republicans," White says. Idaho's boom in the early '90s was fueled by a wave of citified newcomers attracted by low housing prices and opportunities in the semiconductor industry. They might have considered themselves Republicans in California, but in Idaho they don't usually take the hard-line views of the GOP locals. "There are at least 100,000 voters out there who have moved here since 1990," says White. "They've never had a chance to vote for Larry Craig. They don't know who this guy is, and they don't necessarily agree with him. Those are the voters we're going after with a vengeance." In most states, 100,000 voters wouldn't make a difference. But, in Idaho, it takes only 276,512 votes to win, White calculates, and they're competing for every single one.

Idaho's Republican Party, by contrast, tends to cast out its nonconformists. In July, a group of Republican businessmen—including a former state legislator—declared its support for Minnick at a press conference on the steps of the state Capitol. The executive director of the Idaho Republican Party, Andrew Arulanandam, shrugs them off as traitors. "They're not really Republicans," he says. Arulanandam is right. They're not really Republicans—they're swing voters, and an "independent running as a Democrat" might appeal to a lot of them.

CHRIS FARNSWORTH is associate editor of *Boise Weekly*.

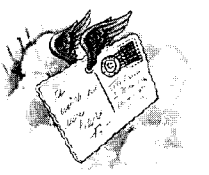
JERUSALEM POSTCARD

CLUB RED

By Gershom Gorenberg

Moshe Katz pushes his walker across Kibbutz Ramat Rachel's archives and points to a black-and-white photo of young men carrying sacks the size of themselves. A label reads "1937." The bags on their backs, he explains, held potash trucked from the Dead Sea Works to the Jerusalem train station, where porters from the kibbutz lugged them to railroad cars. Katz speaks slowly, apologizing for his octogenarian lungs. To be a porter was the most respected job in the commune, he says, "because you had to lift 100 kilos." The black-haired men in the picture smile at the camera. "Here," Katz says, "this is me."

Today, Ramat Rachel looks like a resort, a posh summer camp: one- and two-story buildings set along footpaths and wide lawns, shaded by towering pines. Most of the kibbutz's income comes not from its orchards, but from its 100-room hotel, a restaurant and a swim-and-tennis club with a view of the Judean Desert. When Moshe Katz arrived in 1933, an idealistic ex-yeshiva student from Lithuania, seventy people lived on a barren, rocky spur between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, depending for their water on one pipe that, as Katz remembers, "trickled like a baby making pee-pee." Seven years before, the kibbutz had been founded by members of the Labor Brigade, who aimed at nothing short of turning Jewish Palestine into one giant commune.



"Only 3 percent of the goal came true," Katz says, slightly overstating the proportion of kibbutzniks in Israel's population. Today they're barely able to preserve socialism in their own communities. The country's 270 kibbutzim labor under immense debts, which are forcing many to sell prized farm land for urban development. In a country where individual comfort has replaced collective ideology, kibbutzim find themselves on the margins of society.

In Ramat Rachel's early years, to be a kibbutznik was to give oneself entirely to the Zionist cause. Kibbutz members were a vanguard, to be called on at a moment's notice to serve in the pre-state underground or the new state's fledgling military. In peacetime, they worked—at quarries, building sites, the potash works in the relentless heat of the Dead Sea coast—not just to support the commune but to prove, as Moshe Katz recalls, "that a yeshiva student or Jewish gymnasiast could work harder

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AMNIO TO GENOME

Research on genetic diseases – notably many diseases of childhood – is entering an exciting, promising new phase. As scientists intensify the process of deciphering the secrets of the human genetic blueprint, their findings yield critical new clues to the development of genetic diseases and to the search for new therapies. ❧

The figures are staggering: deciphering the blueprint means the ultimate sequencing of 3,000,000,000 letters of the human genetic code. Genetic diseases number about 5,000. ❧ The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, takes pride in its commitment to both these research challenges. Years ago, discoveries in a Weizmann laboratory led to the first uses of amniocentesis to examine the fetus and diagnose hereditary illnesses. Among current projects on the Weizmann agenda are studies of fundamental embryonic development, Down syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, insulin substitutes and vaccinations against juvenile diabetes. The establishment of the Bioinformatics Genome Research Center on the Weizmann campus underscores the growing contributions of Institute scientists to the World Human Genome Project. ❧ It's another example of how support for basic scientific research yields practical benefits previously beyond reach.

The Weizmann Institute, founded in 1934, is a community of 2,400 scientists, engineers and scientists-in-training engaged in a full agenda of 850 research projects ranging from basic medical diseases to chemistry, physics, agriculture, computer science and the environment, research in cancer, AIDS, neurosciences and children's

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
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than an Arab." Self-abnegation was prized. Political leaders wrapped themselves in the movement's hardy ethos. Today, such a bootstrap mentality invites irony. One political scientist notes that, when a commune "got a beauty parlor for members, that was the end of the kibbutz self-image."

The decision that changed Ramat Rachel's direction came a few months after the Six-Day War, which left the kibbutz dining hall ruined by an enemy shell. Tourists were pouring into Jerusalem, rooms were short, so the kibbutz opened a youth hostel. Member Yossef Engel remembers that some members opposed the move: "They wanted to farm, not to work in services." But, once the decision was made, business grew steadily. The swim club, opened in the '70s, now has 2,000 members from the city below. At the front desk of the hotel, built in the '80s, brochures advertise the kibbutz's cosmetician and beauty salon. Outside on a summer night, as a band and Hebrew crooner played generic tunes for the wedding reception of a popular local singer, kibbutz members served dinner to the several hundred guests. Near the buffet table, hay bales were carefully stacked and decorated with flowers and cloth, in nostalgic rusticity.

Ramat Rachel's transformation has been repeated in kibbutzim across Israel—though, in most communes, it is factories rather than hotels that overshadow the cotton fields and chicken coops of old. A kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley—a region that in Israeli folklore stands for pioneer Jewish farmers battling malaria—exports computerized systems for cleaning private swimming pools to the U.S. Only one-fifth of kibbutz production is now agricultural, says Oded Barish, head of the Kibbutz Industries Association: "It's very different from kibbutz of twenty years ago, and from the picture that people still have." Barish adds proudly that kibbutzim produce 8.5 percent of Israel's exports.

But this transformation has not been entirely rosy. For years, kibbutzim were considered safe credit risks and needed loans to grow. What's more, kibbutz managers point out, decisions were often based not on profits but on the old assumption of serving national interests. "Kibbutzim financed all sorts of projects for reclaiming water," one manager told me, "with loans that turned out to be extremely expensive." Some managers simply goofed and went into the red. Then, in the late '80s, Israel's government used astronomic interest rates (up to 100 percent a year in real terms) to tame hyperinflation. Kibbutz leaders woke up suddenly to a collective debt estimated at $4 billion or more—at least $32,000 for each man, woman and child in the kibbutz population.

The movement remains shaken. Leaders have quit and moved to the city. Communes have turned large factories over to boards of directors chaired by outside businesspeople. At least ten have sold stock on the Tel Aviv exchange. With more people leaving kibbutzim, admits Barish, "I'm sorry to say that the trend toward us remaining the managers, with the workers from outside, could continue." Kibbutz socialists, that is, risk becoming capitalists who happen to live communally.

And perhaps not even that communally. Nearly a quarter of all kibbutzim have stopped serving dinner at the collective dining hall; members prefer eating at home. A survey by Haifa University sociologist Michal Palgi found that about half of all kibbutzniks are in favor of paying members overtime for extra work—breaking with "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—though only ten communes have made that radical move. In a subtler sign of individualism, Palgi notes that kibbutzniks no longer have lower divorce rates and higher fertility rates than other Israeli Jews.

And in the Israel of the '90s—where high-tech entrepreneurs are the heroes and Zionist goals seem mostly accomplished—kibbutzim find their special claim to the land weakened. By farming, kibbutzniks carried out a mission for the nation as collective—not only raising food, but showing that Jews could raise food. But, with kibbutzim in hock and the urban population climbing, the government is forcing communes near cities to give up farmland in return for a share of the millions developers will pay. Soil has become a commodity, and the kibbutzim, over their own objections, are trafficking in it.

Sometime soon, bulldozers could begin clearing sixty acres of Ramat Rachel's orchards to build a 1,300-unit housing development. Originally, a government planning committee had rezoned virtually all of the commune's 250 acres of cherry, apple, nectarine and plum trees, says Amram Dahan, the kibbutz's general secretary. Though the kibbutz was $20 million in debt, "we took lawyers and appealed" because "farming is in our blood." Kibbutz official Yigal Mussinger won't comment on press reports that Ramat Rachel has received tens of millions of dollars for its land, saying only that the deal will eventually cover the commune's debts "with money left over."

At Ramat Rachel, life for now remains strikingly communal. The dining hall is busy at meal time. Members receive a set budget for expenses, adjusted for family size; there's been no formal discussion of change. "But I expect it," Mussinger says. "I'm still alone on this.... You work eight hours, or five, or ten—I think it's worth weighing a way to measure a person's contribution, and pay accordingly.... We're not a nature reserve."

Amran Dahan's discomfort is different. In the kibbutz movement, "the 'together' is fading away," he says. True Ramat Rachel's grown children are joining as members rather than moving to the city. Its businesses are flourishing; the kibbutz plans to double the size of the hotel. But, Dahan says, the movement "should be laying out missions that can unite kibbutzim and involve them in Israeli society." Problem is, today's Israel doesn't seem interested in a vanguard hungry for new missions. It wants a spot where software engineers and lawyers can swim laps before work, or play tennis in a hilltop breeze. And Ramat Rachel is providing it.

GERSHOM GORENBERG is op-ed editor of *The Jerusalem Report.*

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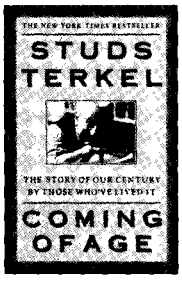
What's On Your Mind?

Thought-Provoking Selections from Barnes & Noble.

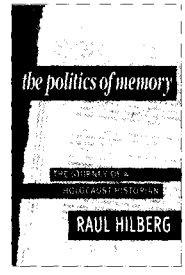


Coming of Age
by Studs Terkel
The Pulitzer Prize–winning historian redefines old age in stories of remarkable people, ages 70-99, whose lives paint a portrait of our tumultuous 20th century.
(St. Martin's Griffin)
$16.95

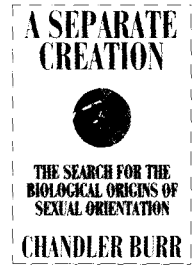
The End of Racism
by Dinesh D'Souza
"Not since...*An American Dilemma*...has any book looked so searchingly at the role of race in American society....It is must reading."—*Forbes*
(Free Press Paperbacks)
$16.00

Evil Sisters
by Bram Dijkstra
In this analysis of the woman's role as a seductress throughout history, a professor of comparative literature traces the growth of racism and misogyny in the arts.
(Alfred A. Knopf)
$30.00

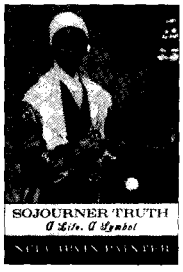
The Illusions of Postmodernism
by Terry Eagleton
The strengths and failings of postmodernism are insightfully critiqued in this lively look at its origins, subjects, fallacies and philosophies.
(Blackwell Publishers)
$15.95



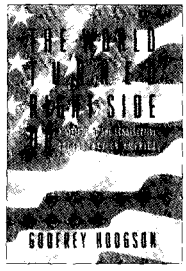
The Politics of Memory
by Raul Hilberg
A Holocaust historian reveals the personal price of his life's work in this poignant memoir of a man surrounded by evidence of one of history's greatest tragedies.
(Ivan R. Dee)
$22.50



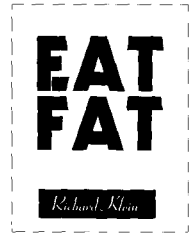
A Separate Creation
by Chandler Burr
The author of the Atlantic Monthly cover story, "Homosexuality and Biology," continues his investigation into one of the most provocative issues of our time.
(Hyperion)
$24.95



Sojourner Truth
by Nell Irvin Painter
"...vividly imagined... forcefully written... one of the finest biographies of recent years. In her dual roles of historian and cultural critic... Painter is brilliant."
—*Joyce Carol Oates*
(W.W. Norton)
$28.00



The World Turned Right Side Up
by Godfrey Hodgson
The ideas and events that led to a turnaround in American politics and public life unfold with clarity in this history of the conservative ascendancy in our nation.
(Houghton Mifflin)
$27.50



Eat Fat
by Richard Klein
The author of *Cigarettes Are Sublime* dissects America's cultural obsession with fat in a cheeky, highly iconoclastic, postmodern diet book.
(Pantheon)
$24.00

Five Equations that Changed the World
by Michael Guillen, Ph.D.
The popular science editor from "Good Morning America" unravels the equations that provided the foundations for the nuclear bomb, airplane travel, moon landings and more.
(Hyperion)
$12.95

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THE QUARTERBACK

By Michael Lewis

> Then Jackie Kemp came on and we seemed to collapse, offensively and defensively. The final score was 50-20. It was the most humiliating moment of my life. I had never lost a game by that kind of score, even in high school.
> —O.J. Simpson, *The Education of a Rich Rookie* (1970)

September 23 & 24:

I am in Jack Kemp's press pool today mainly because no one else wants to be; no one else wants to be because tagging along with the running mate of a presidential candidate who trails by sixteen points with forty-three days to go is not journalism but a death watch. When I ask one of the five other print journalists on the Kemp plane what my pool responsibilities are, he says, "Normally you'd have to come back and tell everyone else what happened, but since no one gives a fuck what happened you don't have to do anything." So for no particular reason I stand watch in the lobby of an old hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, waiting for Jack Kemp to emerge from his fund-raiser. It's closed to the press, as the fund-raisers usually are, to help the donors to believe that they are being told secrets.

Yet, despite the general indifference to Kemp, he is actually the major candidate most worth listening to, mainly because he takes lots of little risks and occasionally says something he isn't supposed to, as when he reminds one crowd of his endorsement of Steve Forbes. Although he is cast as the man of ideas he is essentially a creature of high emotion. The enthusiasm that leads Kemp's tongue to run away with his brain is so infectious that it seems churlish to stop and ask what he means when he talks about the need for prosperity in "Second, Third and Fourth World countries," or when he says that "we are living in the most exciting country, *the most exciting millennium*, in the history of mankind," or when he promises "we're going to cut your taxes *and* balance the budget."

At length Kemp leaves the fund-raiser and joins his motorcade. We're meant to head straight to some factory, but instead at Kemp's insistence we stop at the Gerald Ford Museum, which doubles as a repository of White House memorabilia. It is so chock-a-block with curios that it could be used to illustrate any point about presidential politics a candidate might care to make. Soon enough Kemp is standing without interest between Dolley Madison's ice cream dispenser and William Henry Harrison's cradle. "Where's Lincoln?" he asks the curator. The curator points to a portrait on the wall. Kemp quotes from memory: " 'If I had another face do you think I'd wear this one?' That's what Lincoln said. He had a great, great, great sense of humor."

Then Kemp's eyes pick out a display devoted to the Grant administration. "U.S. Grant," he says. "He did a lot of good things. He also lowered taxes." The curator nods, uncertainly. "Where's Kennedy?" asks Kemp. "Did he raise taxes or lower taxes?" Then he laughs and answers his own question. "He cut the capital gains rate from 49 to 28 percent." "And what happened to the revenues?" asks Joanne Kemp, by his side. "Revenues went up!" bellows Kemp. And then we're headed for the exit, with a brief stop at a display case celebrating Gerald Ford's high-school football career.

"Football," says Kemp, "is the training ground for. . . ." He can't find the word he's looking for.

"Life?" suggests the curator.

"Life," says Kemp. "Absolutely. Well said."

It turns out that football and taxes are the only two certainties of life on the Kemp plane. In two days Kemp speaks at a hospital in Ohio, a lumber yard in Kentucky, a chair manufacturer in Michigan and a police officers' association in New York. At each appearance, someone in the crowd presents him with a football to sign; invariably Kemp takes it and motions for the person to go deep. He then completes the pass as the crowd cheers. Often his first action upon taking the stage is to motion twice with his throwing arm as if he is hurling a bomb. He waves to the crowd by holding both hands out flat and wiggling his fingers in a fashion that is recognizably masculine only because quarterbacks do it in the middle of the game to get the coach's attention. He works the rope line not by shaking hands but by grabbing at them, the way players clasp onto each other in a huddle.

The speeches themselves rely even more heavily on the football metaphor—to the point where it is hard to see where the football stops and the politics start. He introduces his wife as "the only woman in history to be wife and mother to three pro quarterbacks," except when he introduces her as "the real quarterback of the Kemp family." (Only male politicians who clearly have control of their wives can get away with the pretense that their wives are actually in charge.) To a standing-room only crowd at the chair manufacturing company Kemp

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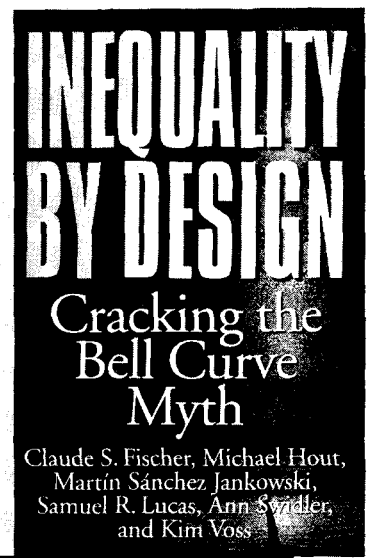
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Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss

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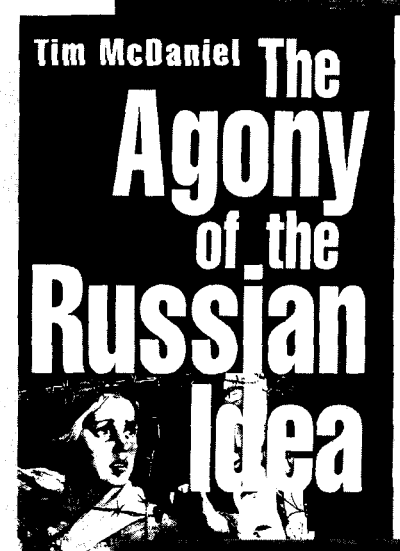

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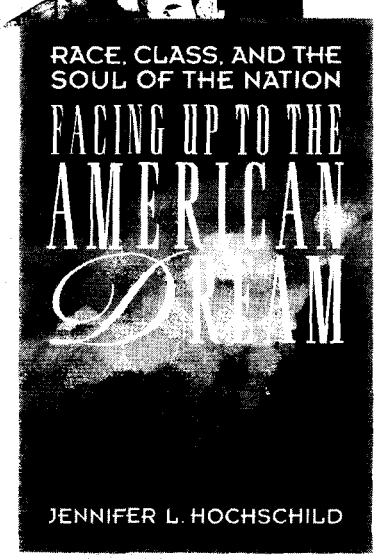

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gives his most ambitious speech. Twenty minutes of hot rhetoric builds up to this:

> I close with this thought. Let's see, how many years ago? 1957. Wow. Almost forty years ago. I started my professional career with the Detroit Lions as their third-string quarterback. And they said I would never make it. I came from the wrong schools. I was too short. I threw too hard. I was too optimistic. I didn't have it. I tell you what. I never gave up. I got traded, sold, hurt, cut, booed, knocked out, but I never gave up. Bob Dole in his career never gave up.... Bob Dole and Jack Kemp are fighters. We believe in the American Dream.

Kemp claims a special affinity to blacks from his experience of playing ball with them. He implies a special understanding of business from his experience of being a team leader. His ability to pull this off has nothing to do with his actual experience of blacks and business (he was the whitest guy on the Bills, for instance, and he blew his football money on bad investments). It depends on the desire of blacks to believe in the myth of the white guy who plays sports, and is therefore "in touch," and of businessmen to believe that Kemp's football experience counts as business experience. I'm not sure about the black experience, but never in history have businesspeople been so prone to making this little leap of faith in football, as you can see wherever Kemp goes. At its moment of supremacy, commerce seems to be more in need than ever before of exciting metaphors to keep everyone interested in it. Could a similar phenomenon be at work in the Kemp campaign—his politics are so inert that people would much rather hear him talk football?

The starting point for almost all of Kemp's political beliefs is a single fixed idea, that lower tax rates will unleash so much economic growth that the government will end up with more tax revenues. Like most of the supply-siders Kemp is deeply sincere; his fierce loyalty to the supply-side doctrine in the face of all the evidence from the Reagan years is a mystery better solved by psychiatry than by economics. In Steve Forbes the impulse toward the supply-side religion seems to be repression—a desire to avoid grappling with objective reality. In Jack Kemp the impulse seems to be expression—a need to get all fired up about an inherently rational subject. Whatever else it is, supply-side economics is relentlessly upbeat: all of our problems have a simple solution, and in solving them everyone gets more, forever. It is as if Kemp chose his economic theory not by its plausibility but by his ability to sell it in a language he speaks. ("Did you ever see anybody so enthusiastic about capitalism?" he shouts to the crowds.) In Kemp's hands economics ceases to be the dismal science concerned with allocating scarce means to alternative ends and becomes ... football!

In New York I am led with other journalists to the thirty-eighth floor of the downtown Marriott. There we stand rigidly outside the door, like patients waiting for their booster shots, until one by one Kemp's press aide comes to fetch us. Interviews with national candidates are not usually designed to convey information or understanding but to strip the journalist of his complaint that the candidate is hiding, which he always is. I have been offered five minutes with Kemp—as I was offered five minutes with Gore. I am pondering the absurdity of trying to glean anything from anyone in five minutes when the journalist before me tells me that he only has two and a half—150 seconds!

Once my five minutes begin, I introduce myself. "You're the famous one from THE NEW REPUBLIC," Kemp says. But before I have a chance to fully absorb that notion, he adds, "The one who wrote that Kemp never had a new idea in his life. Well, you're right, I never had a new idea in my life."

"That's Michael Kinsley," I say. "I've never written about you."

"Oh," he says, "A *tabula rasa*." Just then Joanne Kemp comes in. "Joanne," he says, "this is Michael Kelly of THE NEW REPUBLIC."

"Michael *Lewis*."

"Right, Michael Lewis," he says, just as enthusiastically as if I had been Michael Kelly or even Michael Kinsley.

In his eyes I can see the lights of the stadium clock. Four and a half minutes. "What exactly," I ask. "Is a Fourth World country?"

"A *Third* World country," says Kemp, "is a country that is trying to develop. A *Fourth* World country is a country that is so poor that it doesn't even have a *chance* to develop thanks to stupid IMF policies and ... "

The clock is winding down; I have to cut him off before he eats up more of it with a disquisition on the international financial order. I ask how he became interested in economic ideas. He majored in Physical Education at Occidental College; it's a long way from there to econometrics. Kemp explains that he had "an epiphany" after he heard JFK speak on behalf of lower taxes.

Time for one more play: a Hail Mary. "If the Reagan years didn't do it, what evidence would dissuade you from your belief that lower tax rates will lead to more tax revenues?" I ask. Kemp explains that the Reagan years *proved* his theory and that he and Dole are now engaged in finding the precise point where the Laffer curve bends backwards. (He is anxious that I not say he wants bigger tax cuts than Bob Dole, which until now hasn't occurred to me.) He uses not only the same logic but the same words he used in 1980. Nothing new has gotten inside his head. Kemp is the classic B student, but with a twist: he's also the star quarterback. After the grades are passed out he can visit the headmaster to argue his case. If he is charming enough, and a good enough quarterback, he'll probably persuade the headmaster to fire the teacher.

Afterwards I went back and dug out O.J. Simpson's memoir of his first year with the Buffalo Bills, which was also Kemp's last. The beef about Kemp as a quarterback was his inability to adapt to new situations; the problem came to a head with the Bills. As O.J. wrote:

> When you have veterans on the line and a rookie in the backfield all saying that we should run and the quarterback still keeps throwing passes, it doesn't exactly qualify him as a strong leader. Jack was a heck of a nice guy and a pleasure to talk to—but I was beginning to wonder whether he really heard what you said to him. Telling him I had been open on pass patterns had been like talking to a door.... Even Dan Durragh, the rookie quarterback who had been in street clothes on the sidelines, had commented on how Jack often had his mind made up before he went back to pass. •

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Meet Republika Srpska's new democrats.

PALE IMITATION

By Samantha Power

The price of the September 14 elections in Bosnia was not simply that ethnic cleansers were legitimized; it was, more mundanely, that ethnic cleansers were elected. Though Radovan Karadzic was not voted into office (indicted war criminals were not permitted to run), his ideas were. All three ruling parties—Serb, Croat and Muslim—spent the election "campaign" cracking down on opposition candidates, obstructing the media, stomping out free expression and blocking refugee repatriation. As a result, the vote proved empowering only to those who already held power. The joint institutions so crucial to preserving peace and so often hailed by the Clinton administration as the "way forward" will now be almost exclusively comprised of undemocratic, uncompromising and generally unsavory individuals.

Nowhere is the danger to Bosnia's existence as overt as in Republika Srpska, the Serb half of Bosnia piloted from behind the scenes by Karadzic and now from the democratic stage by a clan of ruthless nationalists. The "Pale Mafia"—whose ideas of ethnic separatism won out in the war—have made no secret of their plan to do everything in their power to sabotage the Dayton peace. Herewith, a look at the new ruling faces of Republika Srpska:

• Biljana Plavsic, President, Republika Srpska

Like the "father of Republika Srpska" before them, Srpska's new leading lights led pre-war lives marred by disappointment. Plavsic, 66, was an ambitious Fulbright scholar who studied in New York in the 1970s and later became a biology professor at Sarajevo University. There she was known as "the Iron Lady" by students and colleagues who feared the attractive, sharp-tongued scientist. A loner who spurned suitors, Plavsic devoted herself to her research in plant diseases and elbowed her way into the department deanship, where she got her first taste of power. In the late 1980s, for the first time in her professional life, Plavsic was snubbed—passed over by Yugoslavia's prestigious Academy for Arts and Sciences. She turned swiftly to politics, becoming a prominent member of the nationalistic Serb Democratic Party (SDS) when it was formed in 1990. In November 1990 she and Nikolai Koljevic, a Shakespearean scholar at Sarajevo University, were elected Serb representatives on the rotating Bosnian presidency. She vacated her post in April 1992 when war broke out and traded laboratory for limousine, moving nine miles down the road to the breakaway Serbs' rural, wartime "capital" of Pale and assuming the post of vice president of Republika Srpska.

Plavsic's biology expertise was not altogether wasted during the war, however. She developed a "biological" theory of ethnic separatism, telling the Serb newspaper *Borba* that the cleansing of Muslims and Croats was a "natural phenomenon" and not a war crime.

In the early days of the conflict, Plavsic took to walking around in battle fatigues; she even had a Serb tank and armored personnel carrier named after her. She held a convoy of Muslim children hostage until her brother and 92-year-old mother were safely evacuated from Sarajevo and was photographed touring newly cleansed eastern Bosnia and planting a kiss on the cheek of Serbian warlord Zeljko Raznjatovic (a.k.a. "Arkan"), a gesture she later explained with the remark, "I always kiss the heroes." Commenting on the plight of Muslims crammed into ethnic ghettos, she said, "Muslims always live like that. They like it. We Serbs like a bit more room." And, if the establishment of *lebensraum* meant a few dead Serbs, that was acceptable. Early in the war, Plavsic advised a group of grieving Serb women, whose sons and husbands had been killed in the war, to save their tears. "Don't weep," she was quoted as saying. "This is only the beginning." Later, in an unforgettable statement, she proclaimed, "There are 12 million Serbs. We can afford to lose 6 million of them in battle." (During the war, a Belgrade joke had Plavsic climbing Mt. Everest in a party with six Serbs and six non-Serbs. When the group reaches the top, she whips out a gun and kills all the Serbs. The non-Serbs are shocked: "Why did you kill the Serbs?" they ask. "Because," Plavsic answers, "they are Serbs—and any land which contains dead Serbs automatically becomes Serb territory. Mt. Everest is now the highest peak in Greater Serbia.")

Neither the advice nor the ire of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic could tame the nationalistic fervor of the woman liberal Serbs call "Miss Necrophilia."

SAMANTHA POWER has covered the war in Bosnia since 1993.

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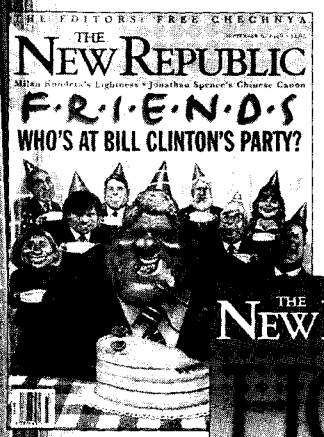

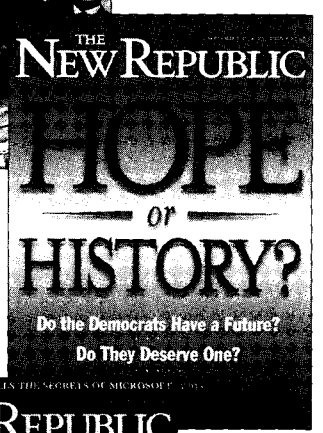

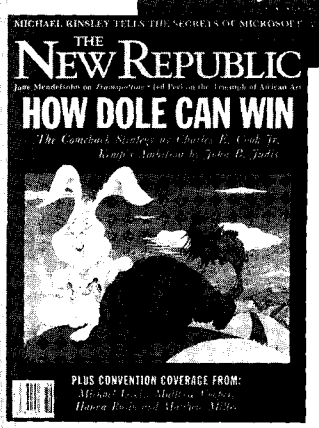

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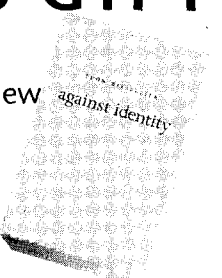

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When Milosevic traveled to Pale in May 1993 to sell the latest international peace plan to the Bosnian Serb parliament, Plavsic effected a lasting rift by refusing to shake his hand and asserting that her people could make up their own minds. After the Bosnian Serb parliament indeed rejected the plan, Milosevic denied Plavsic entry into Serbia, saying, "Such people, if they are not put in a hospital, must be kept from occupying any public function."

So perfidious was Plavsic during the war that she could make Karadzic look like an honest man. On a Bosnian Serb television program, Karadzic discussed the international ban on flights with his vice president: "Radovan, tell them that our airplanes are not flying any more!" Plavsic commanded. "How can I when everyone can see that they are?" Karadzic answered. "No, they're not!" she snapped. "They're flying like crazy!" Karadzic responded, visibly uncomfortable. "Just tell people they are flying to mark Aviation Day," she insisted.

•Momcilo Krajisnik, Serb Representative to Bosnia's Joint Presidency

It was a prison term, not an academic rebuff, that probably planted the seed of resentment in Momcilo Krajisnik, the most powerful man in Republika Srpska. In all likelihood, the ubiquitous Krajisnik—whose bushy mono-brow makes him readily recognizable behind Karadzic in wartime photos—directed the Bosnian Serb war effort all along. David Owen, the plodding negotiator for the European Union, reports in his memoirs that, before deciding anything, Karadzic would look over his shoulder for Krajisnik's assent.

Krajisnik, now 52, was the pre-war director of one of Bosnia's largest state-run firms, Energopetrol, and went to prison in the 1980s for embezzlement. Like his partners in Pale, Krajisnik attributes any misfortune he suffered in the old Yugoslavia (including his jail term) to the fact that he was an oppressed Serb. When war erupted, he happily went from serving as speaker of the Bosnian parliament in Sarajevo to speaker of the self-styled Bosnian Serb parliament in Pale—an ethnically pure version of the Sarajevo assembly comprised of Serbs who walked out of the national parliament to protest Bosnia's declaration of independence. Until last March, he owned a farm in a rural suburb of the capital and bred cattle and pigs, but, under the Dayton Agreement, his property was transferred from Republika Srpska to Bosnian government control. Embittered, he is said to have helped spearhead the massive Serb exodus from Sarajevo last spring, which left whole quarters of the capital in flames.

Like Plavsic, Krajisnik has put his former profession to use, pocketing so much cash from arms and fuel smuggling that, last year at a Serb gathering in northern Bosnia, Bosnian Serb military leader and indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic singled Krajisnik out as a war profiteer and demanded that he leave the room. Though he had no public role in the seizure of the Muslim safe area of Srebrenica last summer, in the days leading up to the Serb attack, Krajisnik was a busy man—allegedly arranging, with his brother Mirko, to smuggle explosives and ammunition into Bosnia from a munitions factory in Serbia. When questioned about these activities, Krajisnik boasted publicly, "If I could ask you to publicize that one of the Serbs, in particular my brother, helped the Serbian people and imported the arms—or as you say smuggled them—I would be proud."

Krajisnik once enjoyed cordial relations with Belgrade, but, when the Serbian president froze him out of the peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, last year, handing him the final agreement (which stripped him of his farm) just minutes before a signing ceremony, the Bosnian Serb exploded and forgot himself on Bosnian Serb television. He described Dayton's maps as "bad, blackmailing and servile" and warned President Milosevic that "nobody ha[d] the right to give territories that we defended in blood."

•Aleksa Buha, President of the ruling Serb Party

Before the war, Buha, now 55, was a professor of German philosophy (his specialties were Kant and Hegel) at Sarajevo University. Having lived in Germany, Belgium, Holland and France as a visiting scholar, Buha was tapped as Serb foreign minister in April 1992. The downside is that, stuck in rustic Pale ever since, he can publish his books only with a military printing company. His latest collection (available for sale in Pale, along with geese and guns) is a ruby red hardcover set of essays and speeches with titles such as "Against the Victory of Stupidity" and "How to Prevent Everything From Going to Hell."

During the war, it was Buha who often articulated the defense of Serb atrocities. When the photos of starving Muslim prisoners in Serb-run camps were released in August 1992, for example, he explained that the starvation was "not deliberate government policy. We don't have enough food to go around for the civilian population. People on the other side of the wire also suffer." Last September, while NATO bombed Serb positions, Buha exhibited his nuanced grasp of statecraft: "The international community can continue to bomb us until they kill us all."

•Jovan Zametica, Political Consultant

If Plavsic is the spinster of Srpska, then Zametica, a 40-year-old bespectacled imp, is its spin doctor. Zametica, who was given the name "Omer" by his Muslim father and half-Serb, half-German mother, emigrated from Bosnia to England in his late teens; like the Turkish janissaries, he has been overcompensating for his "impure" blood ever since. Capitalizing on his connections and schooling—University of Liverpool (degree in history and politics, 1977), London School of Economics (Master's in international history, 1978), Cambridge University (Ph.D. research, tutorship)—this tweedy "neutral observer" (who changed his name from "Omer" to "John" while in England) wrote a series of anti-interventionist, Serb apologist tracts in the early days of the war that made him extremely popular with Whitehall. He even briefed the American ambassador in London on the Yugoslav conflict in October 1991. The zenith of Zametica's hand-to-mouth academic

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A School for Iqbal

Two years ago, the seventh-grade students at Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy, Mass., met a famous person who changed their lives. The celebrity was Iqbal Masih, the 12-year-old Pakistani children's rights activist and former bonded laborer.

Iqbal, who was in the U.S. to receive a prestigious human rights award, had an incredible story to tell. When he was four years old, he had been sold to a rugmaker for the equivalent of $12. He escaped when he was ten and was now working to free other children who were still enslaved. Iqbal had often been chained to his loom and even beaten, but he had not come halfway around the world just to talk about his own suffering. Iqbal told the Quincy students that his ambition was to be a lawyer and the Abraham Lincoln of his country who would put an end to the practice of bonded child labor. Next to freeing children, Iqbal said, the most important thing was making sure they got an education. One of the Quincy students, Amy Papile, remembered that Iqbal "had a blue pen and a carpet tool in his hands. He held the carpet tool up and said, 'This is not the tool children should have.'" He told the seventh graders that he dreamed of founding a school in his home village for children like himself.

We Americans tend to expect very little of our children.

Iqbal Masih seems to have made a powerful connection with the students at Broad Meadows. This was partly because of the contrast between their comfortable lives and the unimaginable hardship of his. Amanda Loos, one of the students, put it this way: "He was so tiny. He had a scar on his eyebrow, where he was hit by an overseer.... The whole time I was with him, I kept thinking we grew up with luxuries, as spoiled brats. And they were working for my luxuries." But the students were apparently also struck by the conviction of a boy exactly their age that he could change an unjust system. So they decided to start a letter-writing campaign to let other American students know about child labor.

Iqbal was murdered—shot dead while riding his bicycle—just a few months after he visited the U.S. This moved the students at Broad Meadows to take on a much bigger project. They decided to raise money to build the school Iqbal had dreamed of. To do this, they sent out thousands of letters, fliers, and faxes and set up a web site (called "A Bullet Can't Kill a Dream") in which they told Iqbal's story. They asked people they contacted to contribute $12—a number they chose because Iqbal was 12 years old when he died and because he was sold to the rugmaker for $12. Originally, they hoped to raise $5000 to build a one-room school, but by September 15, 1996, The Kids' Campaign to Build a School for Iqbal had received $123,200 from students and others in 50 states and 20 countries. The campaign will continue until the end of 1996.

The money will go to establish the Iqbal Masih Education Center, a school for 200 poor Pakistani children who have either been bonded laborers or are at risk of being sold. It will also provide money for 50 Pakistani families to buy back their children from bondage, and it will form part of a future endowment for the school. The Kids' Campaign hopes to dedicate the school on April 16, 1997, the second anniversary of Iqbal Masih's death.

To make the campaign a success, Ron Adams, a teacher and the students' advisor, says the kids worked incredibly hard and took all kinds of initiatives that we don't usually expect of 12- and 13-year-olds. They came to school early, stayed late, and worked through vacations. They sent out thousands of letters, including a personal response to every person or organization that wrote them, and, when they found they would be able to build the school, they wrote to 300 organizations in Pakistan, asking them to submit proposals. Their extraordinary success is worthy of the boy who inspired it, but in many respects these kids are average teenagers—and that is important.

We Americans tend to expect very little of our children. We expect them to be spoiled and cynical. We allow them to be precocious in some ways and babies in others. Then we criticize them for being shallow and selfish. The students from Quincy should make us think again. They were not moved by Iqbal because he had the glamor of a rock singer or sports hero or movie star—malnutrition had stunted his growth and his back was crooked from bending over the loom. They recognized his heroism and responded to that. Our young people want to do more; they want us to expect more of them. The Kids' Campaign to Build a School for Iqbal shows what they can do.

Contributions can be sent to A School for Iqbal Masih Fund, c/o The Hibernia Savings Bank, 731 Hancock St., Quincy, MA 02170. The web site address is http://www.digitalrag.com/mirror/iqbal.html

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career came that same year, when he wrote the "Yugoslav Conflict," an Adelphi paper that was published by the prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies. Laudatory Fleet Street reviews followed, which consecrated his monograph as the "well-crafted," "authoritative" gospel on the roots of the tragedy.

His many sponsors were shocked a few months later when Zametica turned up in Belgrade with the name "Jovan" and the job of mouthpiece for the Bosnian Serb cause—the Serb answer to suave, English-speaking Muslim senior officials. An official at the University of Westminster, where Zametica was then employed as a research fellow, issued a curt statement: "His research has come to an end."

I first met Zametica in Belgrade in August 1994 when, after Milosevic closed the border to the Bosnian Serbs, he was reduced to thumbing a lift to Pale in my car. ("I'm not fat, and I carry a small suitcase," he promised on the phone.) Three months later, in November 1994, he was living out the dream of every bullied schoolboy, telling U.N. Commander Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose—the Sorbonne- and Oxford-educated knight—where to go: "I shall use very undiplomatic language," squealed Zametica. "The message is don't mess about. Don't fuck around. If you hit us, it means war. Repeat. If you hit us, it means an all-out war."

Rose was duly chastened. "No one's messing around with anyone," he soothed. "We are merely trying to act as intermediaries and peace-keepers in a rather confused and difficult situation." To which Zametica replied: "I think you should use all your formidable intellect and authority back in London to state exactly what is at stake here."

Like the rest of the Pale clan, Zametica loves to lie. The difference, former tutors say, is that this Anglophile should know better. "Over the past few days," he declared last year in the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica, "the world media, assisted and prompted by the Muslim authorities, have indulged in an orgy of uncritical reporting on the events in Srebrenica. Claims of torture, executions, rapes and deportations of Muslims are being repeated constantly without any independent confirmation. The truth is that none of the above mentioned has happened.... Serbs treated the Muslim civilians well." More than 6,000 Muslim men and boys are now presumed to have been massacred by Bosnian Serb soldiers.

The problem with having Plavsic, Krajisnik, Buha and Zametica anywhere near Bosnia's joint institutions is not only that they will actively work to partition Bosnia, it's that they have a cannon fodder approach to their constituents. They simply do not give a damn about Serbs. (Bosnian Serb refugees who dare return to Muslim or Croat territory would "no longer be Serbs," Plavsic thundered at a recent rally, "but Turks or Catholics.")

Western leaders justified holding the recent elections with the erroneous reasoning that "if we build the joint institutions, the Serbs will come." The reality is that the current cast of Serb nationalists have spent the last half decade violating shoeless Joe Jackson's call to the plate and coining a call to arms of their own: "if they build it, we will destroy it."

Already Krajisnik, known during wartime negotiations as "Mister No" for his obstructionism, is refusing to convene the joint presidency to which he, Muslim rival Alija Izetbegovic and hard-line Croat Kresimir Zubak were elected. Though the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe rules were spelled out from the start, Krajisnik now says he will not allow Izetbegovic, the leading vote-getter, to serve a two-year term as chairman of the presidency. Krajisnik has also reiterated his demand that the new presidency be built in the industrial Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja, which straddles the inter-entity boundary line. Predictably, he has also begun meeting privately with Zubak and reportedly conspiring to divide the country.

In fact Krajisnik's wish that only a "thin roof" will link the three ethnic groups meshes with the current interpretation of Dayton in Western capitals. Serbs will be allowed separate schools, armies and cultures; they will be required to share with non-Serbs transport and utility links, as well as something called an undivided "international personality." Though the three groups were supposed to employ a common currency, international civilian implementor Carl Bildt has already suggested that the new banknotes might carry different symbols in each region. "It is their country," Bildt said recently. "It is not for me or anyone else to tell them what to do."

The international community's hope is that the joint institutions will function just long enough to enable the forces of integration to take hold. However, the Pale Mafia—whose ideology has now been "democratically" enshrined, and who never signed the Dayton Agreement to begin with—simply will not allow those forces into their neighborhood. "Bosnia could have a higher standard of living than Hong Kong, and Serbs could have sanctions against them until well into the next century," one Pale minister told me, "and we Serbs still wouldn't choose Bosnia.... That is why these elections will be a catastrophe for the international community."

Donald Cameron Watt, the Emeritus Professor of International History at LSE who once wrote letters of recommendation for Zametica, wrote his pupil an open letter last year: "Being soured off by disappointment is one thing. Becoming the mouthpiece of a man who regards mass murder and ethnic cleansing as normal means of warfare is another.... You can look forward to years of contempt and loathing. Stay where you are and rot in the realization of what you have become. But do not, repeat not, expect us to forget or welcome you."

Unlike Professor Watt, the international community has willfully forgotten the deeds and goals of the men and women responsible for the last five years of war and indeed has reached out to embrace them.

It is true that people change. But these people won't. •

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Why America needs atheism.

THE LAST TABOO

By Wendy Kaminer

It was King Kong who put the fear of God in me, when I was 8 or 9 years old. Blessed with irreligious parents and excused from attending Sunday school or weekly services, I had relatively little contact with imaginary, omnipotent authority figures until the Million Dollar Movie brought *King Kong* to our living room TV. Tyrannical and invincible (I never found his capture and enslavement believable), he awakened my superstitions. Watching Kong terrorize the locals, I imagined being prey to an irrational, supernatural brute whom I could never outrun or outsmart. I couldn't argue with him, so my only hope was to grovel and propitiate him with sacrifices. Looking nothing like Fay Wray, I doubted I could charm him; besides, his love was as arbitrary and unpredictable as his wrath.

For the next several years, like the natives in the movie, I clung to rituals aimed at keeping him at bay. (I can only analyze my rituals with hindsight; at the time, I was immersed in them unthinkingly.) Instead of human sacrifices, I offered him neatness, a perfectly ordered room. Every night before going to bed, I straightened all the stuff on my desk and bureau, arranged my stuffed animals in rectangular tableaus and made sure all doors and drawers were tightly shut. I started at one end of the room and worked my way around, counterclockwise; when I finished, I started all over again, checking and rechecking my work three, four or five times.

Going to bed became an ordeal. I hated my rituals; they were tedious and time-consuming and very embarrassing. I knew they were stupid and always kept them secret until, eventually, I grew out of them. I still harbor superstitions, of course, but with less shame and more humor; I find them considerably less compelling.

If I were to mock religious belief as childish, if I were to suggest that worshiping a supernatural deity, convinced that it cares about your welfare, is like worrying about monsters in the closet who find you tasty enough to eat, if I were to describe God as our creation, likening him to a mechanical gorilla, I'd violate the norms of civility and religious correctness. I'd be excoriated as an example of the cynical, liberal elite responsible for America's moral decline. I'd be pitied for my spiritual blindness; some people would try to enlighten and convert me. I'd receive hate mail. Atheists generate about as much sympathy as pedophiles. But, while pedophilia may at least be characterized as a disease, atheism is a choice, a willful rejection of beliefs to which vast majorities of people cling.

Yet conventional wisdom holds that we suffer from an excess of secularism. Virtuecrats from Hillary Clinton to William Bennett to Patrick Buchanan blame America's moral decay on our lack of religious belief. "The great malady of the 20th century" is "'loss of soul,'" best-selling author Thomas Moore declares, complaining that "we don't believe in the soul." Of course, if that were true, there'd be no buyers for his books. In fact, almost all Americans (95 percent) profess belief in God or some universal spirit, according to a 1994 survey by *U.S. News and World Report*. Seventy-six percent imagine God as a heavenly father who actually pays attention to their prayers. Gallup reports that 44 percent believe in the biblical account of creation and that 36 percent of all Americans describe themselves as "born-again."

Adherence to mainstream religions is supplemented by experimentation with an eclectic collection of New Age beliefs and practices. Roughly half of all Catholics and Protestants surveyed by Gallup in 1991 believed in ESP; nearly as many believed in psychic healing. Fifty-three percent of Catholics and 40 percent of Protestants professed belief in UFOs, and about one-quarter put their faith in astrology. Nearly one-third of all American teenagers believe in reincarnation. Once I heard Shirley MacLaine explain the principles of reincarnation on the "Donahue" show. "Can you come back as a bird?" one woman asked. "No," MacLaine replied, secure in her convictions. "You only come back as a higher life form." No one asked her how she knew.

In this climate—with belief in guardian angels and creationism becoming commonplace—making fun of religion is as risky as burning a flag in an American Legion hall. But, by admitting that they're fighting a winning battle, advocates of renewed religiosity would lose the benefits of appearing besieged. Like liberal rights organizations that attract more money when conservative authoritarians are in power, religious groups inspire more believers when secularism is said to hold sway. So editors at *The Wall Street Journal* protest an "ardent hostility toward religion" in this country, claiming that religious people are "suspect." When forced by

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facts to acknowledge that God enjoys unshakable, nonpartisan, majoritarian support, religion's proselytizers charge that our country is nonetheless controlled by liberal intellectual elites who disdain religious belief and have denied it a respected public role.

Educated professionals tend to be embarrassed by belief, Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter opined in *The Culture of Disbelief*, a best-selling complaint about the fabled denigration of religion in public life. Carter acknowledges that belief is widespread but argues that it has been trivialized by the rationalist biases of elites and their insistence on keeping religion out of the public sphere. Carter's thesis is echoed regularly by conservative commentators. Another recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial asserted that religious indoctrination is one of the most effective forms of drug treatment and wondered at the "prejudice against religion by much of our judicial and media elites." Newt Gingrich has attacked the "secular, anti-religious view of the left."

No evidence is adduced to substantiate these charges of liberal irreligiosity run rampant. No faithless liberals are named, no influential periodicals or articles cited—perhaps because they're chimeras. Review the list of prominent left-of-center opinion makers and public intellectuals. Who among them mocks religion? Several have gained or increased their prominence partly through their embrace of belief. Harvard Professor Cornel West is a part-time preacher; Michael Lerner came into public view as Hillary Clinton's guru; Gloria Steinem greatly expanded her mainstream appeal by writing about spirituality. Bill Moyers, who introduced New Age holy men Joseph Campbell and Robert Bly to the American public, regularly pays homage to faith in traditional and alternative forms in television specials. Popular spirituality authors, like Thomas Moore, are regarded as public intellectuals in spite or because of their pontifications about faith. Even secular political theorists, preoccupied with civic virtue, are overly solicitous of religion and religious communities.

The supposedly liberal, mainstream press offers unprecedented coverage of religion, taking pains not to offend the faithful. An op-ed piece on popular spirituality that I wrote for *The New York Times* this past summer was carefully cleansed by my editors of any irreverence toward established religion (although I was invited to mock New Age). I was not allowed to observe that, while Hillary Clinton was criticized for conversing with Eleanor Roosevelt, millions of Americans regularly talk to Jesus, long deceased, and that many people believe that God talks to them, unbidden. Nor was I permitted to point out that, to an atheist, the sacraments are as silly as a seance. These remarks and others were excised because they were deemed "offensive."

Indeed, what's striking about American intellectuals today, liberal and conservative alike, is not their Voltairean skepticism but their deference to belief and their utter failure to criticize, much less satirize, America's romance with God. They've abandoned the tradi-

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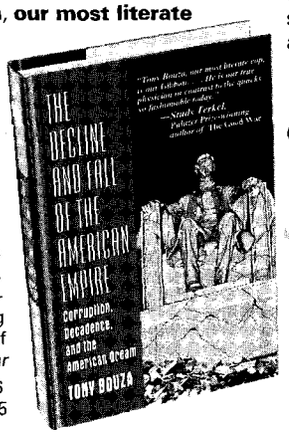

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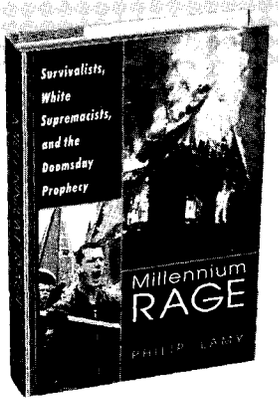

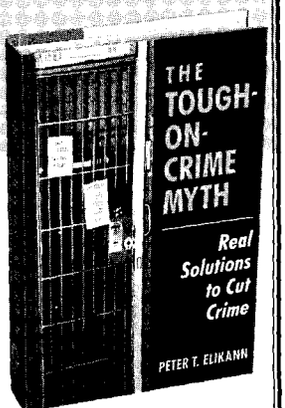

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tion of caustic secularism that once provided refuge for the faithless: people "are all insane," Mark Twain remarked in *Letters from the Earth*. "Man is a marvelous curiosity ... he thinks he is the Creator's pet ... he even believes the Creator loves him; has a passion for him; sits up nights to admire him; yes and watch over him and keep him out of trouble. He prays to him and thinks He listens. Isn't it a quaint idea." No prominent liberal thinker writes like that anymore.

Religion is "so absurd that it comes close to imbecility," H.L. Mencken declared in *Treatise on the Gods*. "The priest, realistically considered, is the most immoral of men, for he is always willing to sacrifice every other sort of good to the one good of his arcanum—the vague body of mysteries that he calls the truth."

Mencken was equally scornful of the organized church: "Since the early days, [it] has thrown itself violently against every effort to liberate the body and mind of man. It has been, at all times and everywhere, the habitual and incorrigible defender of bad governments, bad laws, bad social theories, bad institutions. It was, for centuries, an apologist for slavery, as it was an apologist for the divine right of kings." Mencken was not entirely unsympathetic to the wishful thinking behind virtually all religion—the belief that we needn't die, that the universe isn't arbitrary and indifferent to our plight, that we are governed by a supernatural being whom we might induce to favor us. Still, while a staunch defender of the right to say or think virtually anything, he singled out as "the most curious social convention of the great age in which we live" the notion that religious opinions themselves (not just the right to harbor them) "should be respected." Name one widely published intellectual today who would dare to write that.

Mencken would have been deeply dismayed by contemporary public policy discussions: left and right, they are suffused with piety. The rise of virtue talk—which generally takes the form of communitarianism on the left and nostalgia for Victorianism on the right—has resulted in a striking remoralization of public policy debates. Today, it's rare to hear a non-normative analysis of social problems, one that doesn't focus on failings of individual character or collective virtue: discussions of structural unemployment have given way to jeremiads about the work ethic; approaches to juvenile crime focus on the amorality of America's youth, not the harsh deprivations that shape them. Among academic and media elites, as well as politicians, there is considerable agreement that social pathologies such as crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and chronic welfare dependency are, at least in part, symptomatic of spiritual malaise—loss of faith in God or a more generalized anomie. (Some blame TV.) Try to imagine an avowed atheist running successfully for public office; it's hard enough for politicians to oppose prayer in school.

Today, proposals for silent school prayer promise to bring spirituality into the classroom, avoiding religious sectarianism. "Spirituality," a term frequently used to describe the vaguest intimations of supernatural realities, is popularly considered a mark of virtue and is as hostile to atheism as religious belief. Spirituality, after all, is simply religion deinstitutionalized and shorn of any exclusionary doctrines. In a pluralistic marketplace, it has considerable appeal. Spirituality embraces traditional religious and New Age practices, as well as forays into pop psychology and a devotion to capitalism. Exercises in self-esteem and recovery from various addictions are presented as spiritual endeavors by codependency experts ranging from John Bradshaw to Gloria Steinem. The generation of wealth is spiritualized by best-selling personal development gurus such as Deepak Chopra, author of *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, which offers "the ability to create unlimited wealth with effortless ease." (Some sixty years ago, Napoleon Hill's best-selling *Think and Grow Rich* made readers a similar promise.)

Spirituality discourages you from passing judgment on any of these endeavors: it's egalitarian, ranking no one religion over another, and doesn't require people to choose between faiths. You can claim to be a spiritual person without professing loyalty to a particular dogma or even understanding it. Spirituality makes no intellectual demands on you; all it requires is a general belief in immaterialism (which can be used to increase your material possessions).

In our supposedly secular culture, atheists, like Madelyn Murray O'Hare, are demonized more than renegade believers, like Jimmy Swaggart. Indeed, popular Christian theology suggests that repentant sinners on their way to Heaven will look down upon ethical atheists bound for Hell. Popular spirituality authors, who tend to deny the existence of Hell, and evil, suggest that atheists and other skeptics are doomed to spiritual stasis (the worst fate they can imagine). You might pity such faithless souls, but you wouldn't trust them.

You might not even extend equal rights to them. America's pluralistic ideal does not protect atheism; public support for different belief systems is matched by intolerance of disbelief. According to surveys published in the early 1980s, before today's pre-millennial religious revivalism, nearly 70 percent of all Americans agreed that the freedom to worship "applies to all religious groups, regardless of how extreme their beliefs are"; but only 26 percent agreed that the freedom of atheists to make fun of God and religion "should be legally protected no matter who might be offended." Seventy-one percent held that atheists "who preach against God and religion" should not be permitted to use civic auditoriums. Intolerance for atheism was stronger even than intolerance of homosexuality.

Like heterosexuality, faith in immaterial realities is popularly considered essential to individual morality. When politicians proclaim their belief in God, regardless of their religion, they are signaling their trustworthiness and adherence to traditional moral codes of behavior, as well as their humility. Belief in God levels human hierarchies while offering infallible systems of right and wrong. By declaring your belief, you imply

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that an omnipotent, omniscient (and benign) force is the source of your values and ideas. You appropriate the rightness of divinity.

It's not surprising that belief makes so many people sanctimonious. Whether or not it makes them good is impossible to know. Considering its history, you can safely call organized religion a mixed blessing. Apart from its obvious atrocities—the Crusades or the Salem witch trials—religion is a fount of quotidian oppressions, as anyone who's ever lost a job because of sexual orientation might attest. Of course, religion has been a force of liberation, as well. The civil rights movement demonstrated Christianity's power to inspire and maintain a struggle against injustice. Today, churches provide moral leadership in the fight to maintain social welfare programs, and in recent history, whether opposing Star Wars or providing sanctuary to Salvadoran refugees, church leaders have lent their moral authority to war resistance. Over time, the clergy may have opposed as many wars as they started.

It is as difficult to try to quantify the effect of organized religion on human welfare as it is to generalize about the character, behavior and beliefs of all religious people. Religion is probably less a source for good or evil in people than a vehicle for them. "Religion is only good for good people," Mary McCarthy wrote, in the days when liberal intellectuals may have deserved a reputation for skepticism.

It's equally difficult to generalize about the character of non-believers. Indeed, the disdain for self-righteousness that atheism and agnosticism tend to encourage make them particularly difficult to defend. How do you make the case for not believing in God without falling into the pit of moral certainty squirming with believers? You can't accurately claim that atheists are particularly virtuous or intelligent or even courageous: some are just resigned to their existential terrors.

Of course, whether or not atheists are in general better or worse citizens than believers, neither the formation of individual character nor religious belief is the business of government. Government is neither competent nor empowered to ease our existential anxieties; its jurisdiction is the material world of hardship and injustice. It can and should make life a little more fair, and, in order to do so, it necessarily enforces some majoritarian notions of moral behavior—outlawing discrimination, for example, or a range of violent assaults. But, in a state that respects individual privacy, law can only address bad behavior, not bad thoughts, and cannot require adherence to what are considered good thoughts—like love of God. Government can help make people comfortable, ensuring access to health care, housing, education and the workplace. But government cannot make people good.

Champions of more religion in public life are hard put to reconcile the prevailing mistrust of government's ability to manage mundane human affairs—like mate-

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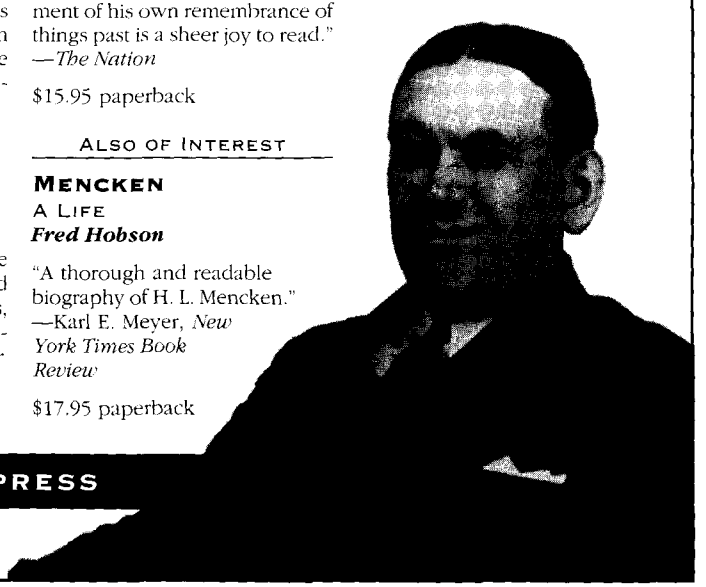

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rial poverty—with the demand that it address metaphysical problems, like poverty of spirit. It is becoming increasingly popular to argue, for example, that welfare recipients should be deprived of government largess for their own good, to defeat the "culture of dependency," while middle-class believers receive government subsidies (vouchers) to finance the private, religious education of their kids.

Even those "judicial elites" scorned by *Wall Street Journal* editorial writers for their hostility to religion are increasingly apt to favor state support for private religious activities. In a remarkable recent decision, *Rosenberger* v. *University of Virginia*, the Supreme Court held that private religious groups are entitled to direct public funding. Rosenberger involved a Christian student newspaper at the University of Virginia that was denied funding provided to other student groups because of its religiosity. A state-run institution, the university is subject to the First Amendment strictures imposed on any governmental entity. Reflecting obvious concern about state entanglement in the exercise of religion, the school's funding guidelines prohibited the distribution of student activities funds to religious groups. The guidelines did not discriminate against any particular religion or viewpoint; funds were withheld from any group that "primarily promotes or manifests a particular belief in or about a deity or an ultimate reality." The student paper at issue in the case was actively engaged in proselytizing.

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Arguing that the University of Virginia had an obligation to pay for the publication of this paper, as it paid for other student activities, editors of the newspaper, *Wide Awake*, sued the school and ultimately prevailed in the Supreme Court, which, like other "elitist" institutions, has become more protective of religion than concerned about its establishment by the state. In a five to four decision, authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, the Court held that the denial of funding to *Wide Awake* constituted "viewpoint discrimination." Religion was not "excluded as a subject matter" from fundable student discussions, the Court observed; instead funding guidelines excluded discussions of secular issues shaped by "student journalistic efforts with religious editorial viewpoints."

It is one of the ironies of the church/state debate that the equation of Christianity (and other sects) with worldly ideologies, such as Marxism, supply-side economics, theories of white supremacy, agnosticism or feminism, has been championed by the religious right. Those inclined to worship, who believe that their sect offers access to Heaven, are the last people you'd expect to argue that religion is just another product vying for shelf space in the marketplace, entitled to the same treatment as its competitors. You wouldn't expect critics of secularism to suggest that devout Christians are merely additional claimants of individual rights: religion is more often extolled by virtuecrats as an antidote to untrammeled individualism. But new Christian advocacy groups, modeled after advocacy groups on the left, are increasingly portraying practicing Christians as citizens oppressed by secularism and are seeking judicial protection. The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), founded by Pat Robertson, is one of the leaders in this movement, borrowing not just most of the acronym but the tactics of the American Civil Liberties Union in a fight for religious "rights."

It's worth noting that, in this battle over rights, science—religion's frequent nemesis—is often reduced to a mere viewpoint as well. Evolution is just a "theory," or point of view, fundamentalist champions of creationism assert; they demand equal time for the teaching of "creation science," which is described as an alternative theory, or viewpoint, about the origin of the universe. "If evolution is true, then it has nothing to fear from some other theory being taught," one Tennessee state senator declared, using liberal faith in the open marketplace of ideas to rationalize the teaching of creationism.

continued on page 32

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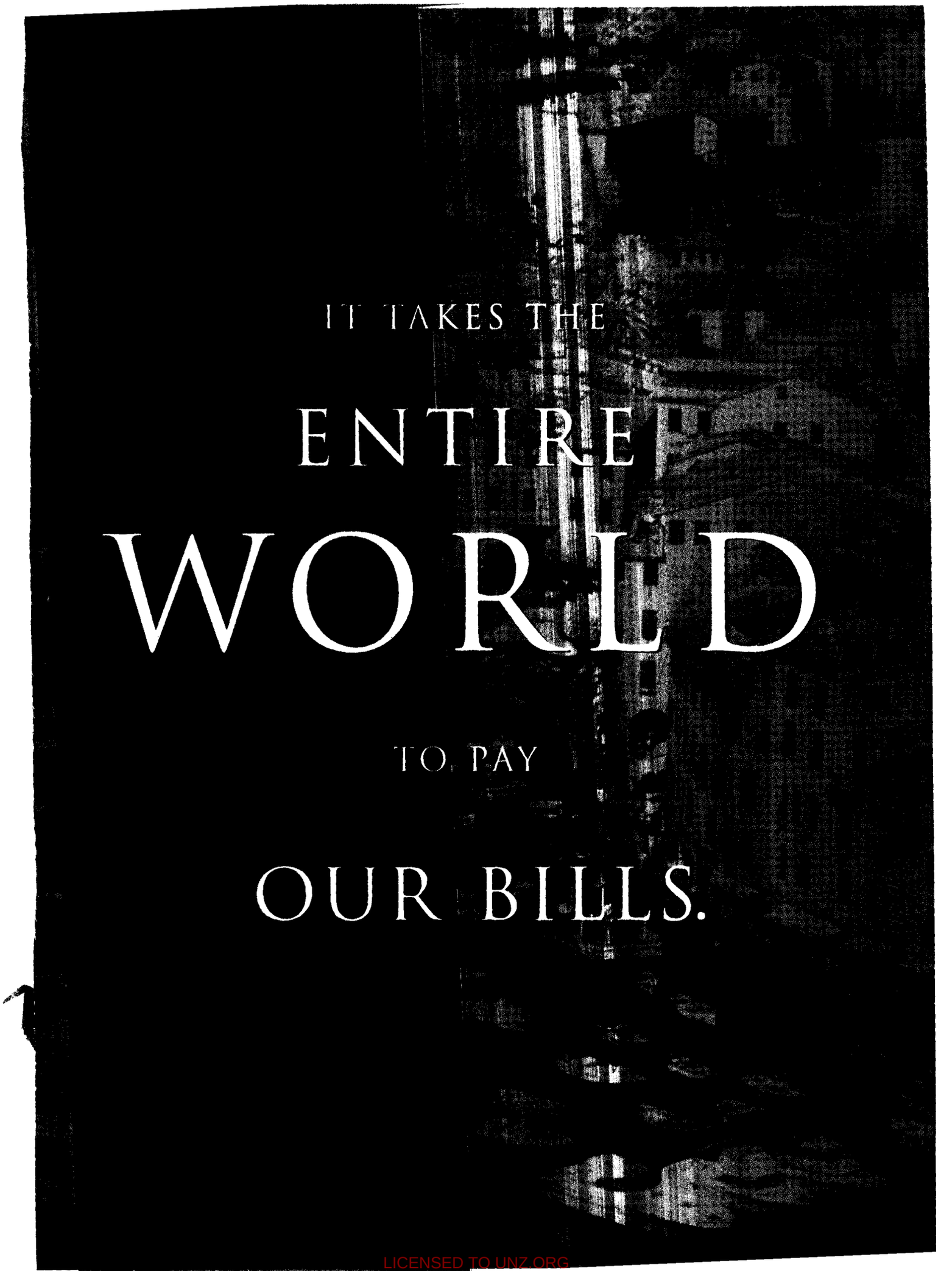

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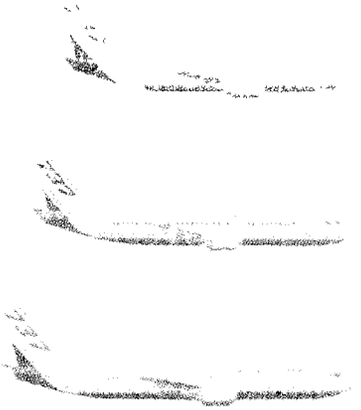

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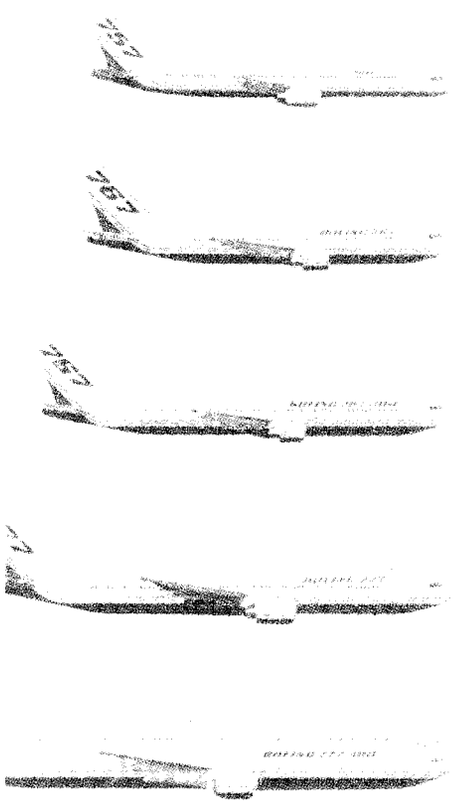

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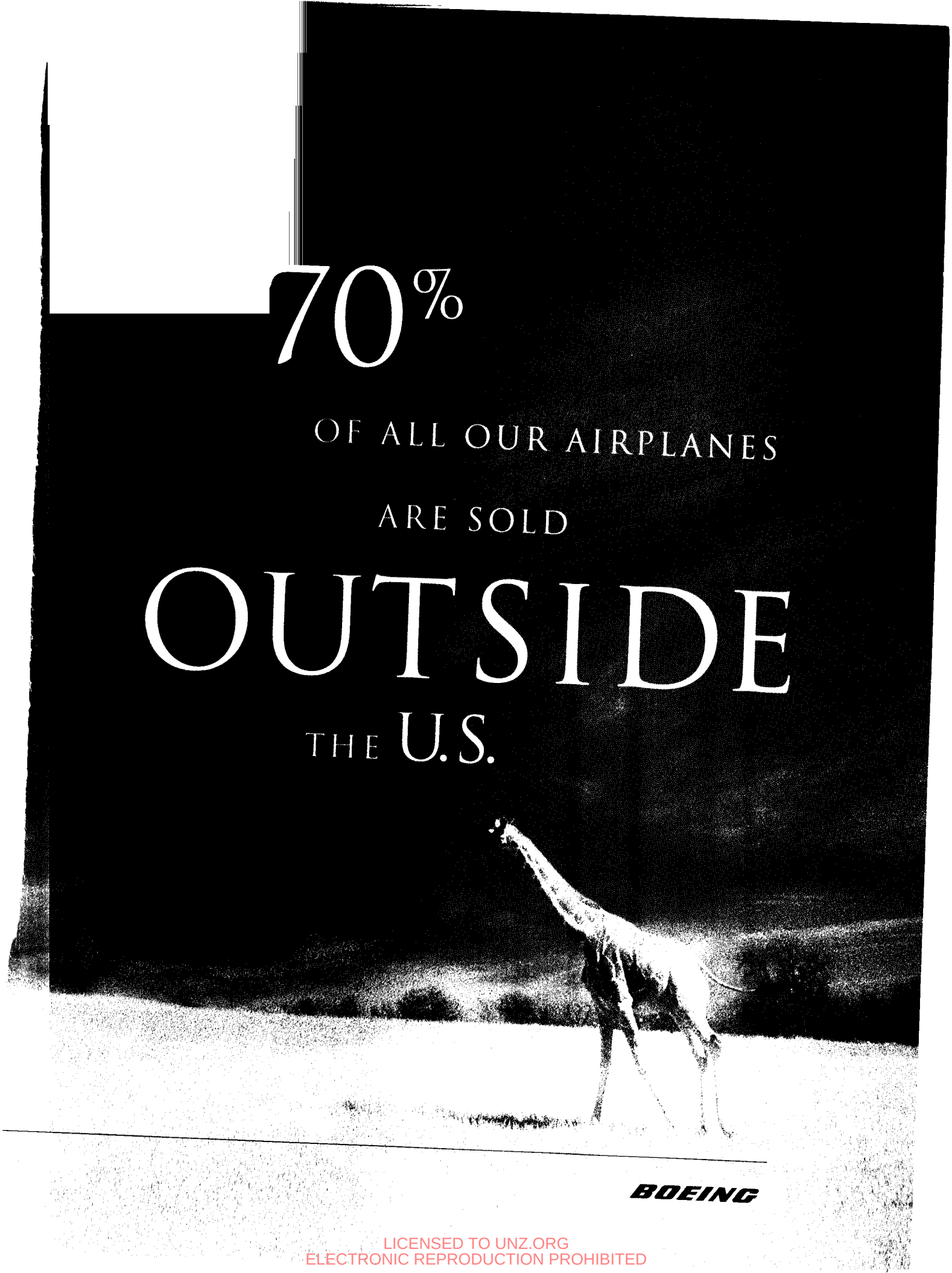

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So far, the Supreme Court has rejected this view of creationism as an alternative scientific theory, and intellectual elites who are hostile to secularism but who champion religion's role in public life generally oppose the teaching of "creation science"; they are likely to ground their opposition in creationism's dubious scientific credibility, not its religiosity. Stephen Carter argues that the religious motivations of creationists are irrelevant; the religious underpinnings of laws prohibiting murder do not invalidate them, he observes.

Carter is right to suggest that legislation is often based in religion (which makes you wonder why he complains about secularism). You'd be hard-pressed to find a period in American history when majoritarian religious beliefs did not influence law and custom. From the nineteenth century through the twentieth, anti-vice campaigns—against alcohol, pornography and extramarital or premarital sex—have been overtly religious, fueled by sectarian notions of sin. Domestic relations laws long reflected particular religious ideas about gender roles (which some believe are divinely ordained). But religion's impact on law is usually recognized and deemed problematic only in cases involving minority religious views: Christian ideas about marriage are incorporated into law while the Mormon practice of polygamy is prohibited.

I'm not suggesting that religious people should confine their beliefs to the home or that religion, like sex, does not belong in the street. The First Amendment does not give you a right to fornicate in public, but it does protect your right to preach. Secularists are often wrongly accused of trying to purge religious ideals from public discourse. We simply want to deny them public sponsorship. Religious beliefs are essentially private prerogatives, which means that individuals are free to invoke them in conducting their public lives—and that public officials are not empowered to endorse or adopt them. How could our opinions about political issues not be influenced by our personal ideals?

Obviously, people carry their faith in God, Satan, crystals or UFOs into town meetings, community organizations and voting booths. Obviously, a core belief in the supernatural is not severable from beliefs about the natural world and the social order. It is the inevitable effect of religion on public policy that makes it a matter of public concern. Advocates of religiosity extol the virtues or moral habits that religion is supposed to instill in us. But we should be equally concerned with the intellectual habits it discourages.

Religions, of course, have their own demanding intellectual traditions, as Jesuits and Talmudic scholars might attest. Smart people do believe in Gods and devote themselves to uncovering Their truths. But, in its less rigorous, popular forms, religion is about as intellectually challenging as the average self-help book. (Like personal development literature, mass market books about spirituality and religion celebrate emotionalism and denigrate reason. They elevate the "truths" of myths and parables over empiricism.) In its more authoritarian forms, religion punishes questioning and rewards gullibility. Faith is not a function of stupidity but a frequent cause of it.

The magical thinking encouraged by any belief in the supernatural, combined with the vilification of rationality and skepticism, is more conducive to conspiracy theories than it is to productive political debate. Conspiratorial thinking abounds during this period of spiritual and religious revivalism. And, if only small minorities of Americans ascribe to the most outrageous theories in circulation these days—that a cabal of Jewish bankers run the world, that AIDS was invented in a laboratory by a mad white scientist intent on racial genocide—consider the number who take at face value claims that Satanists are conspiring to abuse America's children. According to a 1994 survey by *Redbook*, 70 percent of Americans believed in the existence of Satanic cults engaged in ritual abuse; nearly one-third believed that the FBI and local police were purposefully ignoring their crimes. (They would probably not be convinced by a recent FBI report finding no evidence to substantiate widespread rumors of Satanic abuse.) As Debbie Nathan and Michael Snedeker report in *Satan's Silence*, these beliefs infect public life in the form of baseless prosecutions and convictions. If religion engenders civic virtue, by imparting "good" values, it also encourages public hysteria by sanctifying bad thinking.

Skepticism about claims of abuse involving Satanism or recovered memories would serve the public interest, not to mention the interests of those wrongly accused, much more than eagerness to believe and avenge all self-proclaimed victims. Skepticism is essential to criminal justice: guilt is supposed to be proven, not assumed. Skepticism, even cynicism, should play an equally important role in political campaigns, particularly today, when it is in such disrepute. Politicians have learned to accuse anyone who questions or opposes them of "cynicism," a popular term of opprobrium associated with spiritual stasis or soullessness. If "cynic" is a synonym for "critic," it's a label any thoughtful person might embrace, even at the risk of damnation.

This is not an apology for generalized mistrust of government. Blind mistrust merely mirrors blind faith and makes people equally gullible. Would a resurgence of skepticism and rationality make us smarter? Not exactly, but it would balance supernaturalism and the habit of belief with respect for empirical realities, which should influence the formulation of public policy more than faith. Rationalism would be an antidote to prejudice, which is, after all, a form of faith. Think, to cite one example, of people whose unreasoned faith in the moral degeneracy of homosexuals leads them to accept unquestioningly the claim that gay teachers are likely to molest their students. Faith denies facts, and that is not always a virtue.

WENDY KAMINER is a Public Policy Fellow at Radcliffe College and author most recently of *True Love Waits: Essays and Criticism* (Addison Wesley).

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

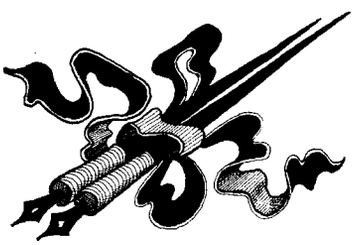
Big ideas

This presidential campaign offers a choice between one big, unworthy idea and many worthy little ones. The big but unworthy idea is at the heart of Bob Dole's proposed tax cut: people should keep more of what they earn. It is not clear why they should. First, given the budget deficit and unmet public needs, the government needs the money. Second, Americans already pay a smaller share of national income in taxes than do citizens of any other industrial democracy. Finally, by offering no higher purpose than lower taxes, Dole contradicts the admirable declaration in his acceptance speech that presidents should place moral considerations above material ones. Dole tries, on occasion, to elevate the moral status of tax cuts, arguing that too much taxation encroaches on liberty. But it is difficult to see how shifting a few hundred dollars per person to private consumption will make Americans more free.

Bill Clinton's campaign, bereft of big ideas, is littered with small ones—a volunteer literacy program, vouchers for job training, a ban on bullets that pierce bulletproof vests, new curbs on cigarettes, a law against forcing women out of maternity wards less than forty-eight hours after giving birth, a plan to reduce busy signals when people dial 911. These are good ideas, but they don't add up to a governing vision. Clinton has decided, probably rightly, that he does not need one to win.

This is the Dole campaign's most important failure: it has made life too easy for Clinton. It has absolved him of the challenge to rethink progressive politics or to grapple with the forces that, sooner or later, will transform American political debate. Had Pat Buchanan been the Republican nominee, Clinton would have been forced to confront the anxieties produced by the changing nature of work, the erosion of traditional communities, the rise of global markets and the declining sovereignty of nations. Faced with a Republican whose political imagination runs in the well-worn grooves of tired party politics, however, Clinton can cleave to the conventional center without addressing the larger questions looming on the horizon. For all the president's talk of a bridge to the twenty-first century, this election will be remembered, if it is remembered at all, not as the beginning of a new era in American politics, but as the fading expression of an old one.

The defining election of the twenty-first century may not come for a decade or more. The questions that animate an age only become clear when, under pressure of events, people find ways of explaining the new circumstances in which they live. The election that "built the bridge" to the twentieth century did not occur until 1912. It was then that Woodrow Wilson, the Democrat, and Theodore Roosevelt, running on the Bull Moose ticket, articulated the big ideas that gave shape to the politics of the twentieth century.



Their predicament was similar to ours. Then, as now, there was an uneasy fit between the scale of economic life and the terms of political community. Railroads, telephones, telegraph wires and daily newspapers spilled across local boundaries, bringing people into contact with events in distant places. National markets and a complex industrial system made workers and consumers interdependent. But Americans, accustomed to finding their bearings in small communities, felt powerless in the face of forces beyond their control. A decentralized political system, invented for a nation of farmers and shopkeepers, was dwarfed by the power of giant corporations.

How could a locally based democracy govern an economy national in scope? That question divided Wilson and Roosevelt. Wilson argued for breaking up the trusts and decentralizing economic power so it could be held accountable by local political units. Big business had become "vastly more centralized than the political organization of the country itself," Wilson declared. Corporations had bigger budgets than states "and loomed bigger than whole commonwealths in their influence over the lives and fortunes of entire communities of men." Simply to accept and regulate monopoly power was, according to Wilson, a kind of capitulation. "Have we come to a time," he asked, "when the President of the United States must doff his cap in the presence of this high finance, and say, 'You are our inevitable master, but we will see how we can make the best of it?' "

Teddy Roosevelt considered big business an inevitable product of industrial development and saw little point in trying to restore the decentralized economy of the nineteenth century. The only way to contend with national economic power, he argued, was to enlarge the capacity of national democratic institutions. The solution to big business was big government. Roosevelt sought to meet national economic power with national political power. But he insisted that a national democracy required more than the centralization of government; it also required the nationalization of politics. The political community had to be recast on a national scale. Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" sought to inspire in Americans "a genuine and permanent moral awakening," a new sense of national citizenship.

Wilson won the election, but Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" won the future. From the New Deal through the Great Society, and even to the age of Reagan and Gingrich, the nationalizing project gave energy and purpose to American political debate—to liberals who sought to expand the responsibilities of the federal government and to conservatives who sought to constrain them.

But today we face a new predicament similar to the one Americans confronted early in this century. Now, as then, new forms of commerce and communication spill across political boundaries, creating networks of interdependence while disrupting familiar forms of community. What railroads, telegraph wires and national markets were to their time, cyberspace, CNN and global markets are to ours—instruments that link people in distant places without making them neighbors, or fellow citizens, or participants in a common venture. Once again, the scale of economic life has outgrown the reach of existing democratic institutions. This explains the sense of disempowerment that hovers over our politics, the gnawing doubt that either party can do much to allay the anxieties of the age.

That we are not debating questions analogous to those that preoccupied Wilson and Roosevelt reveals the poverty of our politics. Is democracy possible within a true global economy? How can emerging transnational arrangements from NAFTA to GATT to the International Court of Justice possibly inspire the loyalty of neighborhoods and nations? If civic virtues must be nourished closer to home—in schools, congregations and workplaces—how can such communities equip us to exercise citizenship on a global scale? The bridge to the twenty-first century will not be built with a lot of small answers but by a few big questions.

MICHAEL J. SANDEL

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Debt Honored

David Lean began life as a dunce. His kindergarten teacher told his mother that she was afraid he would never be able to read and write. He managed to disprove that prediction, but otherwise there was little sparkle. He munched through schooling, entered his father's accounting firm at the age of 19, in 1927, and quickly showed no aptitude for the work.

The most striking thing that had happened to him so far was his discovery of film. His Quaker family had forbidden the cinema, but at 13, with his mother's connivance, he began to go, to respond. Still, the move toward working in films didn't originate with him. An aunt visited the Lean home in the dull London suburb of Croydon after he had begun accounting, saw all the film magazines now openly on view, and suggested the film field for him. Lean père, possibly not unwilling to get David out of his office, gave him an introduction to accountants at the Gaumont studio. So in 1928 the son became a runner-and-teaboy at Gaumont, unpaid. Before very long they paid him ten shillings a week.

The raise was the least of it. Lean had found his habitat. In the earlier years of this century, something magical happened to some men. The arrival of the film, its invention and proliferation, transformed them. Many of the early directors came from one kind of artistic background or another, but some of them had no such background or ambition. Josef von Sternberg might have spent his life in the lace business; Howard Hawks might have remained an engineer and William A. Wellman an aviator if film hadn't existed, hadn't drawn them to artistry in this new medium. Lean might have browned out his life as a London accountant.

Kevin Brownlow's munificent biography **David Lean** (A Wyatt Book for St. Martin's Press, 810 pp., $40) brims with the details of the life Lean did live. Brownlow is an accomplished film historian whose work is in both books and documentaries, and the first notable point about his new book is a film analogy. This volume about Lean suggests immediately a latter-day film epic by Lean: it is large, long and beautifully produced.

It began as an autobiography, on which Brownlow was helping Lean. They began work in January 1990; Lean died in April 1991. He had given his aide a great deal of material in conversation, and Brownlow decided to press on in the mode of oral history. His own writing is lively, though not much more; but he has interviewed almost everyone available who was involved in Lean's life and work. In his introduction Brownlow says: "I know this will not be the last biography of David Lean." I can't see why not.

At Gaumont, Lean soon became a cutter—what we now call an editor. He rose rapidly in the profession. By the time that Gabriel Pascal had conned Bernard Shaw into giving him the film rights to some plays, Lean was the desired editor for *Pygmalion* (1938) and *Major Barbara* (1941). By the time Noel Coward was to direct his film *In Which We Serve* (1942), he sought out Lean and soon made him co-director. On Coward's next two films, *This Happy Breed* and *Blithe Spirit*, Lean was sole director. By 1946 Lean was considered, after Carol Reed, the best director in England. He was 38.

Film by film, Brownlow takes us through the entire Lean career, with dozens of photographs inset in the text and with many full-page photographs, thirty-two in black and white, sixteen in resplendent color. The pages teem with instances of Lean's directorial vision and command. Like most modern biographers, however, Brownlow is reluctant to omit anything he has researched. Some long letters and memos could have been condensed. We get potted biographies of quite incidental people; we get plot summaries of sources, let alone the films. The endnotes are a touch prolix. (When T.E. Lawrence appears, we're told that he was born in 1888. An endnote adds that it was August 16, Napoleon's birthday.) But, if the Brownlow cornucopia overflows, at least it's full.

Lean's private life, colorful in itself, is counterpointed with his work. He was married six times. One of the reasons for this marital marathon was that he was prodigiously attractive to women—a tall, slender man with the face of a gentle hawk—long before he was rich and famous and of course no less so later on. Women besieged him, making constancy difficult, particularly during the first clump of marriages. Not contradictorily, perhaps, he could be rather a cold man. He walked out on his first wife and their infant son and wasn't in touch with them even when the child needed an operation and the wife had a car smash. But the

FILMS WORTH SEEING

American Buffalo. *Dustin Hoffman and Dennis Franz fulfill—almost—the surrealistic patterns of mystery and anguish that underlie David Mamet's play set in a junkshop. (Reviewed 9/16 & 23/96)* **Looking for Richard.** *Al Pacino, who has played Richard III on stage, assembles friends and others for a freewheeling examination of the play and its performance. Lots of fun, despite the grim subject, with flashes of insight. (9/30/96)* **Maborosi.** *The husband of a young Japanese wife inexplicably commits suicide. The shadows touch her subsequent life. Done in an exquisitely gratifying visual style. (9/30/96)* **Secrets & Lies.** *A London domestic drama involving race, somewhat tidily concluded but richly performed under Mike Leigh's perceptive direction. (9/30/96)*—**SK**

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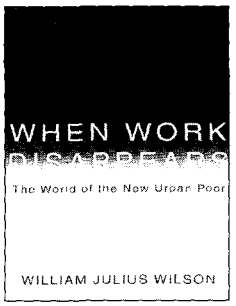

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One of America's leading sociologists analyzes the disappearance of work and its effects on the residents of inner city Chicago.
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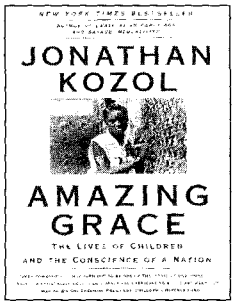

Amazing Grace
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Award-winning author Jonathan Kozol reveals the hearts of children who grow up in the South Bronx—the poorest congressional district of our nation.
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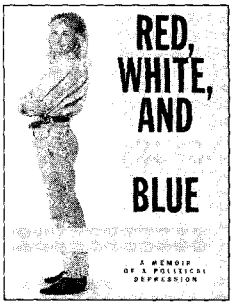

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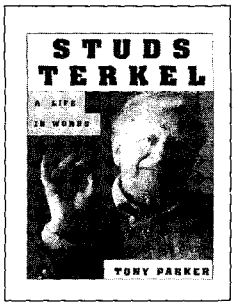

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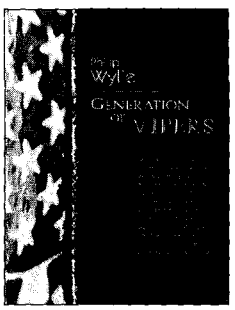

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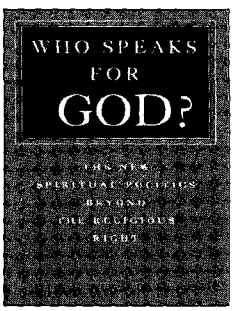

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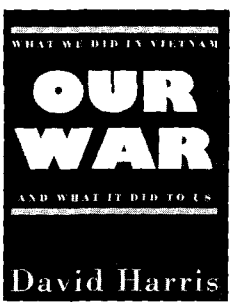

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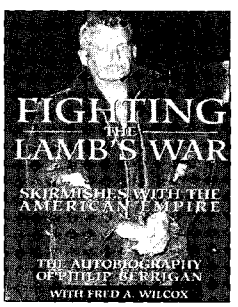

Fighting the Lamb's War
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with Fred A. Wilcox
Common Courage Press

Berrigan recounts his life as a prominent peace activist, a man of God who challenged his own religion to practice what it preached.
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The Coming Race War in America
By Carl T. Rowan
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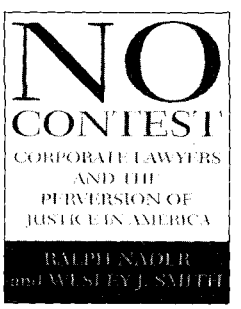

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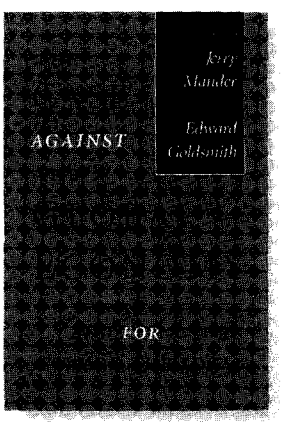

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lengthy list of Lean's frigidities, familial and otherwise, is paradoxical against his many generosities—again not only when he was rich and famous. Though Brownlow mercifully doesn't wallow in psychobiography, he does often aptly try to connect some choices in Lean's film material with his background and temperament.

Anyone who has been moved by Lean's work—and who else would read this book?—will relish the "backstage" anecdotes. Examples: the beloved Robert Donat was chosen and tested and found wonderful to play Willie Mossop in *Hobson's Choice* (1954), but the strain of testing brought on a recurrence of Donat's asthma, and the insurance company would not pass him. John Mills was summoned and was at his best; but Robert Donat! Marlon Brando accepted the role of the lover in *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), but commitments intervened. He was replaced with a pipsqueak who helped to doom this ill-considered venture.

With actors, Lean was generally edgy. Excepting a few—Katharine Hepburn, Charles Laughton, Celia Johnson—he was uncomfortable with them. Considering that he was a man who loved to be rid of his actors, to finish shooting and to closet himself with bits of film in the editing room, it's extraordinary that he evoked so many memorable performances. There are dozens: I cite one. Peter O'Toole as Lawrence.

Any record of a busy director must include the projects that didn't come off. Two in Lean's life are especially poignant because, later, other people used the subjects. He wanted to do the life of Gandhi with Alec Guinness; and in the fourteen-year interval between *Ryan's Daughter* and *A Passage to India* he spent several years on a two-film project about the *Bounty* incident, which he planned to treat quite differently from the Laughton-Gable picture. Both screenplays were completed by Robert Bolt, who had written *Lawrence*, and were praised by every producer who read them. In New Zealand a $2 million facsimile of the *Bounty* was built—of steel, with invisible motors. A $3 million hotel was built in Tahiti to accommodate the cast and staff of the film. But the enterprise simply disintegrated. A very thick book could be compiled of the interesting projects that prominent directors planned and didn't accomplish.

What, finally, if that word is ever possible in artistic comment, is Lean's stature? André De Toth, a vivid director himself, who assisted for a time on *Lawrence*, told Brownlow that Lean "was a great master of yesterday ... David was a slow river.... He was never a mountain stream. But I think he was one of the really great men." Not far off the mark, as I understand De Toth. Lean was not much of an innovator, but a master of what was known.

He paid his debt to film for giving him his life. At his best, he created works that could exist only as films. I've just re-seen *A Passage to India*; and, in my view, anyone who objects to it because of its adaptation of Forster must also object, on the same ground, to the Bizet-Meilhac-Halévy *Carmen* for its adaptation of Mérimée, to the Balanchine *Don Quixote* for its adaptation of Cervantes. To compare Lean with those creators in process and intent seems to me just: his film, adapted from Forster, is in itself a complete, sophisticated work of art. With this picture and with his adaptations of Dickens and T.E. Lawrence and Pierre Boulle and others, Lean honored the art that made him an artist. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

French Scenes

Frederick Wiseman—and let me confess at once that he is a friend of mine—has been making documentaries about institutions for over thirty years. Most of these were developed from an adversary position. Wiseman's very first film, the grainy, black-and-white, long-suppressed *Titicut Follies*, ran into legal trouble over its depiction of horrific conditions at Bridgewater State mental hospital. And *Welfare*, perhaps his finest sustained work—a wry relentless record of the humiliations experienced both by workers and recipients in the bureaucratic New York system—made a strong if implicit case for welfare reform two decades before the current debate. With his latest documentary, *La Comédie-Française Ou L'Amour Joué*, Wiseman has at last made a totally positive case for a human institution. The result is a glowing cinematic tribute to the achievements of this long-lived repertory com-

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pany and to the talents of its big-hearted actors.

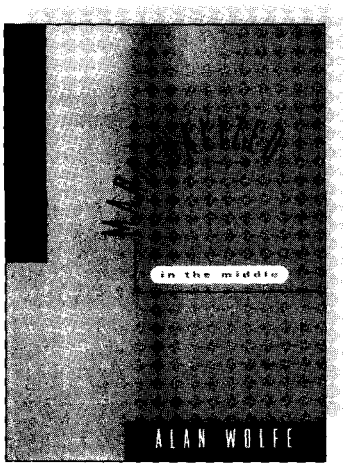
Clocked at three hours and forty minutes, *La Comédie-Française* sometimes seems as long and leisurely as the company's 316-year-old history. It is certainly a lengthy sit for anyone but those enchanted with the process of making theater. It is also possible that not everyone will come away as fascinated as the filmmaker with the rather unadventurous productions of this venerable institution. Still, for all its longueurs and its repetitions—and *répétition*, we should remember, is the French word for rehearsals, of which we see many—the cumulative effect of the documentary is curiously moving, sweet and endearing. Wiseman spent eleven weeks at the Comédie, shooting 126 hours of film. He steeps us in the day-to-day process of the company—play selection, casting, set and costume construction, administrative meetings, union negotiations, ticket purchases—continually cutting back to exterior shots of its handsome five-story theater building and stage house, along with cinematic snapshots of the city in which it is located, a city he obviously adores.

Unlike most theaters in our own country, the company, the building and the city are inseparable: the Comédie-Française is among the best-loved cultural institutions in Paris. As a filmmaker who must scrounge continually among recalcitrant funding agencies in order to ply his trade, Wiseman is obviously struck by the theater's entrenched place in the hearts of its countrymen. "What particularly impressed me about the French," he writes in a press release, "is the large amount of money the state invests in cultural activities—one-percent of the national budget. The Comédie-Française has existed for more than three centuries because the government recognizes the importance and value of the theatre and other arts to the proper functioning of a civil society." His film, therefore, while celebrating French culture, also functions as a kind of implicit rebuke to our own miserly, culture-adverse, uncivil society—a dramatic demonstration, by indirection, of the impact of a nation's arts investment, or lack of it, on the confidence of its artists and the spiritual constitution of its people.

The Comédie is alternately known as the House of Molière, the great comic playwright who originated this theater in the late seventeenth century. The film begins and ends with actors celebrating the founder's birthday in front of his bust with responsive readings of lines from his plays. One of these plays—*Dom Juan*—is in rehearsal, along with Racine's *La Thébaïde*, Marivaux's *La Double Inconstance* and Feydeau's *Occupe-toi*

ALAN WOLFE

MARGINALIZED in the middle



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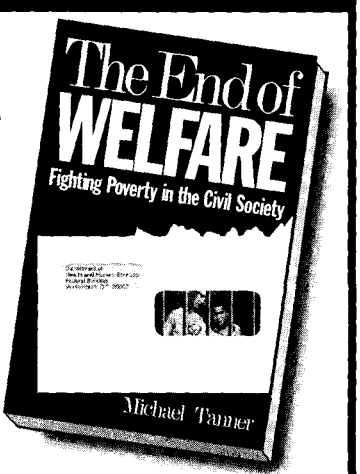

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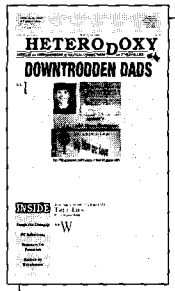

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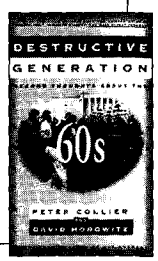

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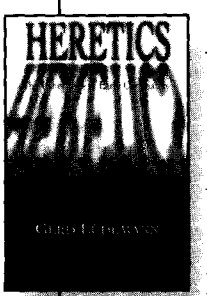

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d'Amélie. All are French classics (two of them, the Molière and the Marivaux, recently came to the Brooklyn Academy of Music). Conspicuously missing from the schedule are any works from abroad or even from the contemporary French repertoire, nor can it be said that the classical productions, however vigorously performed, appear particularly fresh in their approach.

At a training meeting for ticket sellers, one telemarketer compares the current administration of Jean-Pierre Miquel (directing Marivaux) with that of past artistic directors such as Jacques Lasalle (directing Molière). He expresses concern that, although he knows the company has an obligation to innovate, there had been public indignation in the past over radical production ideas, such as having Caligula make his entrance on a moped. Perhaps as a result of the uproar ("how can the Comédie-Française produce such nonsense?"), the current administration has become considerably more cautious and conservative.

Watching Miquel rehearse *La Double Inconstance*, we see the best of that conservatism in action. Miquel is a strikingly handsome, suave and cosmopolitan individual with a deep sonorous voice. He is immensely intelligent and deeply read, and he conducts the rehearsal like a scholar in a classroom, always responsive to the opinions of his students, yet gently prodding them toward the proper approach to the text. Clearly, tradition weighs heavily on his mind—some very great actors have played these roles in the past. Still, we are again and again reminded of how actor-director discussions (a process known as table talk) can manage to evoke subtle new meanings. Miquel's exchanges with the actors range from readings of lines and interpretations of character to reflections on the ambiguities of great playwrights to comments on the nature of politics, which he compares to Marivaux's game of love, a hypocritical defense against boredom.

Clearly Miquel is no stranger to politics, being the prime mediator between the permanent acting company and competing pressure groups—the ministry of culture on the one hand, the unions on the other. He regrets the recent cuts in subsidies that have forced the company to dig into munificent reserves and reduce the number of new productions by one ("we can't appear to be rich"). He presides over the admission of new societaires—four contract actors voted in by the company. He averts a threatened electricians' strike by granting them a small "rotation bonus," already provided the stagehands, while giving a "technical bonus" to the flyhands. At a long table decorated with Vichy water, he informs the company of the 3.2 percent ceiling allocated for raises and describes the way that civil servants depend on tax-free bonuses. Witnessing these discussions and negotiations is equivalent to watching paint dry, but it is precisely the kind of tedious business that makes possible the exciting life of the stage. It is heartening to see how Miquel maintains his good nature without ever relinquishing his sense of command.

By contrast, the other directors seem either too dictatorial or too laid back. The celebrated Roger Planchon, rehearsing the Feydeau farce, is a precisionist, marking every move and every intonation, while Jacques Lasalle, rehearsing *Dom Juan*, is not entirely in control of his process. He watches, with transparent fatigue, as Roland Bertin, the actor playing Sganerelle, dominates the rehearsal with a long and tedious debate about the original meaning of Molière's phrase "*Tout de même.*" (Andrezej Seweryn, the mesmerizing Polish actor cast as Dom Juan, maintains a bleak but eloquent silence during the whole harangue.) Bertin is what we call a "high maintenance actor." He takes up a lot of air, but the patience of the others in the room is a tribute to their preternatural tolerance. American actors would more likely tell him to shut up and sit down.

In contrast to American method actors, often embarrassed by good articulation, the French actors glory in language. They are taught to "take delight in every verb." Even in the dressing room applying their makeup, they are rehearsing their lines. This plangent declamation, the sound of actors reading verse, however, is continuously undercut by silences, as Wiseman focuses the camera on seamstresses sewing pleats on costumes, technicians building and mounting sets, workers eating in the cafeteria, audiences lining up for tickets. For all the interesting detail of performance (Seweryn's Dom Juan seducing a peasant girl by slowly lifting her sleeve and kissing her arm), it is almost an anticlimax when the actors finally take their places on the stage and the curtain rises to reveal the rather tame results of all this careful preparation.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Wiseman's film is the way it documents the family life of the Comédie-Française. It is a family that looks after its own. Three scenes in the film reveal concerns about the well-being of elderly members. One shows a retiring technical director, once an actor as well, being celebrated for his thirty years in the theater. After being presented with a gold watch so he can keep time in his new life, the man breaks down expressing *beaucoup de chagrin*, a heavy heart: "All

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that's left of my acting days is stage fright." In another episode the doyen of the company, Catherine Samie (who plays Jocaste in *La Thébaïde*), makes an impassioned plea to the Ministry for home care for aging actors who deserve to have eyeglasses and false teeth and, above all, a telephone to keep touch with the outside world: "We communicate, and we've never been so alone." And in one of the last scenes of the film, also its most moving, Samie visits a former Comédie actress, Suzette Nivette-Paillard, who is celebrating her hundredth birthday in a retirement home for artists. (A wall photo of her as a young woman suggests she was once a dead ringer for Danielle Darrieux.) After the Mayor of Versailles presents the new centenarian with a silver medal, Samie, who has inherited many of her roles, speaks of Nivette-Paillard's seventeen years with the Comédie, remembering her stage fright, her smile, her kindness to young actors like herself. She concludes the ceremony by giving this toothless, wizened, but wonderfully alert and obviously delighted old woman a kiss from the entire company. Together, they testify to the almost religious nature of their profession ("They call me Sister Catherine") and how deeply it has ennobled their lives.

At a time when people in our own country tend to distrust institutions, Wiseman has managed to dramatize how a generous artistic organization, endowed with an honored tradition and proper government support, can be a source of extraordinary nourishment, for its members and for its audiences. The Comédie-Française may not be at the height of its artistic glory now. It features no actors of the magnitude of Louis Jouvet, no productions of the brilliance of his *L'École des Femmes*. But as a compassionate institution, sensitive to the needs of all its constituencies, it has few peers.

Lacking established roots or firm traditions, the American theater has no choice but to innovate. Yet we pay a price in rivalry and careerism. The faces of the Comédie actors in rehearsal and in performance display no strain or neurosis; their behavior toward each other is that of support, not competition. Wiseman's film is a testament to the positive influence of a benign environment on the character of a people. It reinspirits the effort to establish a humane theater culture in our own benighted nation. •

Good Habits

BY JAROSLAV PELIKAN

Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia by Jo Ann Kay McNamara

(Harvard University Press, 751 pp., $35)

If I were the Devil, I would have arranged for the teaching orders of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States (and the parochial schools that have depended on them) to go into sharp decline at the very time when the youth of the inner city are most in need of the educational structure and the moral discipline that the sisters have traditionally provided. And then, if I wanted to make an entire generation into victims of their own sexual desires, I would remove from view the alternative vision of a life that is enabled, through self-discipline and prayer, to love genuinely and deeply by being set free from the tyranny of those very desires.

And, to extend my diabolical speculation across the entire spectrum of social classes, I would in this way rob the feminist movement of one of its most productive historical resources. For the secularism of many contemporary feminist intellectuals has blinded them to their most important ancestresses and "foremothers." Those predecessors were not the new heroines of scholarship and cultural polemic, the Mother Goddesses or the Amazons or the Hetaerae or even the Hypatias of classical antiquity; they were nuns of Catholicism, who have "through two millennia" uniquely articulated and embodied what Jo Ann Kay McNamara calls in this extraordinary book "the image and reality of the autonomous woman," with an "independence ... sometimes far in advance of their secular contemporaries." One historical reason for this blindness to the religious achievements of gender, McNamara suggests, is that "the leaders of the

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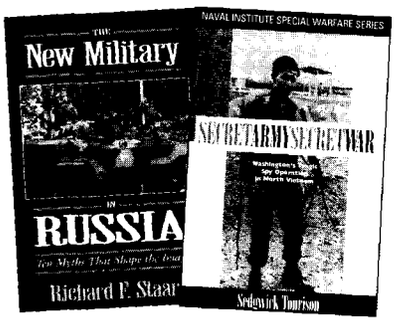

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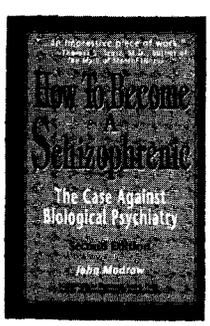

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Enlightenment built up a humanitarian social vision that transformed the highest ideals of Christianity into liberal secularism and obviated the connection with the redemptive work of the monastic order."

That irony is matched by many other ironies in the history of the women's religious communities, going back to the earliest days of Christianity. The vocation of the nun has by definition been an otherworldly one, and "the most definitive agent of monastic life was the chant." Hence "the greatest monastic work," we are informed by McNamara, "was prayer, which absorbed women and men alike"; the very name for the observance of the canonical hours of prayer is (or was, while anyone understood Latin) *opus Dei*. On the frontiers of Christian civilization in medieval Europe, "the frontier between earth and heaven, heaven and hell, had ultimately more meaning for their lives than the wilderness of the time-bound world." And this was precisely what made them so powerfully relevant to the situation of that "wilderness of the time-bound world." As an epitome of the historical process by which primitive Christianity was transformed into the Church Catholic and, in the process, became a world-transforming force itself, those who had denied the world for Christ, women as well as men, helped to conquer the world for Christ.

Such a nun was "no languishing bride nor far-away princess sighing for her knight," as McNamara rightly observes, but "a soldier resolutely guarding the cosmic frontier, a dragon-slaying Martha rescuing souls in peril." In the process of bringing Christian faith and Latin culture to the Franks during the early Middle Ages—thereby laying the foundations of Western medieval civilization—"about a third of the monasteries that evangelized that frontier were women's communities." And the paradigms for this cultural revolution, for the Christianization of the Aristotelian distinction between the contemplative life and the active life, were provided by the Bible.

The distinction between contemplation and action is embodied in the Gospels in the figures of Mary and Martha of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus visited. According to the narrative in the tenth chapter of Luke, Martha "was cumbered about much serving," while Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." While acknowledging with gratitude and appreciation that Martha was "careful and troubled about many things," Jesus reserved his special commendation to Mary: it was she who clearly recognized that "one thing is needful" and had "chosen that good part." The tale in Luke, as McNamara writes, "allotted to Mary and Martha of Bethany the twin roles that women made for themselves within the Christian community: the mystic and the minister."

"The development of these two roles," she further explains, "will occupy the bulk of this history." For, on the one hand, "women maintained a firm hold on the contemplative life through the development of both reclusive and communal (monastic) lifestyles"; and on the other hand, "the feminine apostolate to the poor and the sick ... has been maintained firmly as one of the glories of the Catholic sisterhood," even though it "has had a more difficult history because of the reluctance of society to recognize the public roles it allotted to women." This counterpoint between Mary and Martha sounds and resounds throughout the narrative. Owing to my own recent researches into the history of devotion and doctrine attaching to the Virgin Mary, I was especially interested to read about Marguerite Bourgeoys in seventeenth-century Montreal, who, "departing from the traditional choice between Mary or Martha of Bethany ... hoped to emulate the Blessed Virgin in her *vie voyagère*, her life as a pilgrim in the outside world." Marguerite, as was said in the late Middle Ages, became ambidextrous: she practiced both the contemplative life and the active life.

Christian monasticism is, in a sense, older than Christianity. The communities of Jewish ascetics in the Egyptian desert—the men called *therapeutae* and the women *therapeutrides*, as described by Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus and Paul—resembled their later Christian counterparts so closely that the fourth-century Christian historian Eusebius took Philo to be talking about Christian monks and nuns. Already in the New Testament, however, we find references to women with the title "deaconess" or "widow" or "virgin," perhaps as designations of a special office or at least a special way of life, though the details are not clear. During the second and third centuries, Tertullian and Cyprian, both in North Africa, speak of women who have taken "vows" of sexual continence, but evidently such vows were still private and any communities of such women were informal.

Still, both male and female monasticism began to flourish in the fourth century; and with the establishment of Christianity in the Empire, when it became easier to be a Christian than not to be one, women as well as men fled from the world—and from the worldly church—to lead a dedicated life, solitary or commu-

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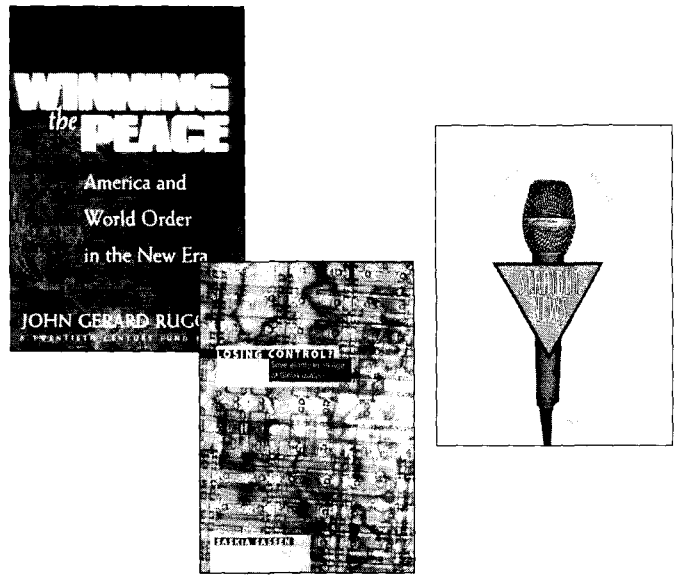

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nal. Saint Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, was a major promoter of the religious life for women, and he helped to establish model communities of women in Palestine near the end of the fourth century. When, a century or so later, Western monasticism achieved the institutional form that it has had ever since, with the founding of Monte Cassino around 529 by Benedict of Nursia, his sister Scholastica founded a convent at nearby Plombariola.

The history of the church, and therefore the history of Western civilization, has been marked in every time and every place by the presence of "sisters in arms." As McNamara points out near the end of her book, "there has never been a Christianity that did not rely on the prayers and services of dedicated women." Particularly dramatic, perhaps because it is so understated, is the book's account of what happened to religious women in the period of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. During the crises of the preceding two centuries, the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Papacy in Avignon and then the Great Schism, when there were two Popes neither of whom could elicit undivided loyalty or provide moral leadership, "reform was often a feminine enterprise," under the leadership of such groups as the Sisters of the Common Life, a community founded in Deventer, in the Netherlands, by Gerard Groote in the latter half of the fourteenth century, who joined with the Brethren of the Common Life to advance a program of lay reform and biblical piety, as this would become known throughout Europe a hundred years later through the works of Deventer's most outstanding alumnus, Desiderius Erasmus.

Into this situation came Protestantism, which sought to "liberate" nuns from the prison of the cloister. Martin Luther, a sometime Augustinian monk, married one such nun, the ex-Cistercian Katherine von Bora, in 1525. Reformation theology emphasized the divine initiative and the undeserved character of grace as a gift, over the claims of human merit and striving, which it accused medieval scholastics of having substituted for "grace alone" and "faith alone." But in the process it "attacked the spirituality most associated with women, denying the redemptive value of prayer and sacrifice."

King Henry VIII, for example, "moved against [nuns] with the same fierce self-righteousness that drove his relationships with his wives," and only eighteen nunneries survived the Act of Dissolution of 1536. It was reported that "10,000 former nuns lived in England after the suppression and none were allowed to marry," while some of them "held out in their decaying buildings ... and still lived to return under Mary Tudor." It needs to be noted as well that Protestantism did hold a certain attraction for many nuns, especially for those who had been cloistered against their will, perhaps as children. Others found it possible to continue the religious life as Protestants. Thus, "the Bourbon abbesses of Faremoutiers and the Parackete did not disturb their comfortable celibate lives because they embraced Lutheran ideas. They simply remained abbesses over Catholic nuns while practicing the Protestant religion."

All this, McNamara writes, "suggests that their collective devotional life meant more to them than confessional loyalty." On the darker side, without assigning a unilinear causality, she notes the historical coincidence that "as popular religion turned away from the monastic image of celibate women as brides of Christ, the fearful vision of the witch as Satan's sexual partner arose in its place," with repercussions that continued both in the Roman Catholic Inquisition and in the religious history of colonial and Protestant America.

Underlying the hostility of the Protestant Reformers to monasticism was the belief—shared by many secular moderns who otherwise have little in common with them—that the celibate life was somehow unnatural. "We still refuse," McNamara observes at the beginning of her book, "to recognize the legitimacy of choosing chaste celibacy." Along with poverty and obedience, chastity is an obligatory vow of nuns and monks. In an excursus of several pages on "the three fundamental vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience," she provides careful definitions and examples to support the accounts that follow. "Chastity involved a spiritual transformation, the purification of the entire spirit from the faintest thought of adultery against the immortal spouse to whom both men and women were wed," and the same was true of the other two monastic virtues. McNamara vividly illustrates the extremes to which the fear of lost chastity could go, as well as the admission at more than one place that the ideal of chastity was not always preserved. She also wisely provides a warning—a necessary warning, if one looks at the sensationalist propaganda of past and present—that scandal-mongers are not to receive automatic credence even when they are slandering nuns. "Just as some convents were crucibles of mystics," McNamara writes, "others were barrels of bad apples. Saint Michael's in Stamford is the worst house recorded in medieval England. Under an aged and infirm prioress, one nun ran away with a friar, came back, and eloped with a harper."

More striking is McNamara's repeated recognition of the close connection between "purity and poverty, freedom and chastity, rebellion and renunciation." For chastity and celibacy are usually defined in negative terms, as merely the total abstinence from sexual activity; and this has the consequence of scanting its positive dimension. "The single concept that appears to have attracted all the active religious women [in the fourth and fifth centuries]," writes McNamara, "was the power of celibacy to free them from the disabilities of womanhood." There was frequently a "silent struggle" within the great Roman families between the traditional need that a daughter "secure alliances" and produce male heirs to perpetuate the line and the determination of the Christian daughter to assert control over her own life and her own body by spurning matrimony and voluntarily dedicating herself to the Lord.

The vow of poverty had some of the same liberating power. Although "the problem of class relations and social stratification," so beloved of some present-day social historians as an explanation for almost everything past and present, remains "complex and ultimately impenetrable," the histories of medieval convents make it clear, in McNamara's authoritative account, that administrative authority usually devolved on women from the nobility or even "royal women." Some of these aristocratic women were "nam[ed] as abbesses on entry" into the religious life as little girls. From their well-born families, these noblewomen brought "natural administrative talents." They also brought wealth and the style of life that went with it. And yet such "private property was, obviously, the most subversive element against community"—and for this reason "personal wealth was to be transformed into corporate wealth." In this way, "the common purse was not only a symbol of solidarity, it was a guarantee of survival in that it aimed at alienating property from the individual sister and from the reversionary claims of her family as well." Thus "to each according to her need, from each according to her ability, was the basic tenet of monastic life." Significantly, the campaign of the Reformation against convents and monasteries often concentrated on the sequestration of their property and its confiscation by the crown.

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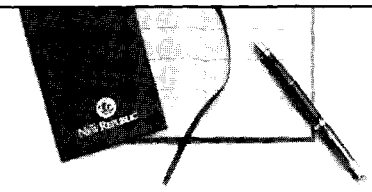
Of the three monastic vows, obedience, with its concomitant virtue of humility, was in many ways the most ambiguous, especially for women. "Monks and nuns alike are far more fixated on [humility and obedience] than on chastity simply because they were relatively so hard to achieve," McNamara observes, defying what those who have not striven to practice any of the three virtues may believe about their relative difficulty. It may be hard to imagine in our highly eroticized society, but obedience and humility were harder to accomplish than chastity. Indeed, obedience and humility "topped the scale of monastic virtues, a quality best developed under the constraints of community," and they were probably even harder for aristocratic women to learn to accept than were the limitations of poverty.

But obedience to whom? When the system worked, it was the abbesses, usually highborn, who claimed authority, by which "they enjoyed many of the administrative (but not the sacramental) prerogatives associated with bishops and expressed by the shepherd's crook, which they bore as an iconic attribute." In the struggle between the Empire and the Papacy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, "there seemed to be no place for the great abbesses," who came to see a newly assertive episcopate "as a principal source of their difficulties," not least because "the wars between papal and imperial forces provided ideal opportunities for bishops and advocates to help themselves to monastic estates," particularly "those belonging to women's institutions, in the name of security." It had initially been to the abbess—by herself or, in hard cases, with the entire sisterhood—that a sister would confess her sins and share in "the compassionate, intimate elements of confession—its healing and strengthening quality." But that power eventually devolved on the priest and the bishop, at least partly because a growing emphasis on the sacramental (as distinct from the pastoral) nature of the penitential system required that it be the work of those who had been ordained.

In the period of the Counter-Reformation, obedience came to be the most highly prized of the three monastic virtues. When, in the eighteenth century, rationalism and militant secularism, as most forcefully expressed in the French Revolution, launched "a broad attack on the religious orders" beginning with "the dissolution of the Jesuits," the question of obedience became, as it would later under the Nazis and especially under the Communists, a matter of choosing between the spiritual and the secular authorities. In those dangerous times, "cloistering became a daring and difficult vocation." These were the hard realities of 1789 that were unforgettably re-enacted in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Georges Bernanos's play of 1948, and then in Francis Poulenc's opera of 1957, in which the sisters found a new courage of heroic dimensions within them—or beyond them—as, one by one, they mounted the scaffold to die in defense of their vocation.

Above all these considerations, above even the virtues and the vows, was "the communal solidarity that gave sweetness to the concept of an enclosed life." Indeed, community provided the context within which the monastic virtues themselves, and above all humility, could best be developed. It was a community that transcended differences of social class, wealth and even, as noted earlier, confessional loyalty during the conflicts of the Reformation. And the sign of community, its matrix, was joint participation in prayer and liturgy, the *opus Dei*. It was here that "conflicts were resolved and communal love reinforced. For within the convent, for all their irritations, they loved one another.... Monastic liturgy developed into a sort of spiritual drill, molding the eccentric soul into a trained soldier." I have watched friends of mine who are members of such communities discover that the cadences of the Latin Psalter, recited "in choir" month after month and year after year, can become part of one's moral vocabulary, of one's own psychology, to be summoned up and shared with others in times of crisis and in the hour of death.

Even gender was transcended. For, as McNamara writes, "Christianity opened the way for a positive ideal of womanhood as the repository of the virtues most prized in Christian teaching, meekness and humility oddly paired with the manly virtues of courage and perseverance when God's will ran contrary to that of man." But "the most deeply radical social concept that Christianity produced" was the "ideal of syneisactism, women and men living together chastely without regard for gender differences." This ideal of syneisactism is mentioned already in the New Testament and in other early Christian literature, but it was in monasticism that it found institutional form. Women and men were "equals in prayer." For "monasticism was a lay movement. The pastoral work of nuns did not differ in quality from that of monks." Saint Benedict of Nursia, the sixth-century founder of Western monasticism, was not a priest but a layman, and the *Rule of Benedict*, which has been



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called the last monument of Roman jurisprudence, envisions a community of lay brothers, joined in work and worship and not distracted by the duties of the outside world (which included the duties of the outside church that devolved on the ordained priesthood). It was a community in which the classical Greek ideal of "everything in moderation" was to be applied to food and drink, to clothing and speech, but also to work and self-mortification. "To prefer nothing to the love of Christ" was the principle.

But the distinction between priesthood (all male) and monastic communities (male and female) eventually eroded, and in both directions. On the one hand, the demands of the mission field and the requirements of parishes pressed monks into service as priests, all the more so because they could read and write. On the other hand, the campaign of clerical reform associated with Pope Gregory VII, beginning with his elevation to the Throne of Peter in 1073, which was aimed at freeing priests from external claims upon them, took the form of importing the standards of the monk, especially celibacy, into the priesthood. And, almost inadvertently, the enforcement of this standard had the effect of opening to the monk the opportunity to aspire to the ranks of priest or bishop or even pope—all of which were closed to the nun. The result, says McNamara, was a "schism between monks and nuns" and a "growing sense of the church as a male club." Thus "the post-Gregorian clericalization of monks drove a wedge between them and nuns, who remained of necessity the only practitioners of the old lay monasticism," except for those monks who were never ordained.

In one of the most original contributions of her book, McNamara points again and again to an unforeseen consequence of this development. In his conflict with the Donatist schism in North Africa, Augustine of Hippo had formulated a defense of the objectivity of the sacraments against the heretical charge that the sins of a bishop or priest vitiated the grace of the sacraments that he administered. The sacraments were valid, according to Augustine, by the power of the institution of Christ, regardless of the morality or the immorality of the human being who administered them. This opened up a momentous distinction between priests and nuns. "Immoral priests could still deliver good sacraments but nuns had to be personally holy to help their patrons." Expiatory prayers were what nuns had to offer, but "unlike the sacramental system, the expiatory prayers that generated transferable grace depended for their efficacy on the virtue and self-mortification of ascetics." This became an especially insidious version of the old double standard.

It is unavoidable, perhaps, that McNamara's historical studies compel her to raise the question of women and the church in the form that it has taken in the twentieth century. For if, as she puts it, "the Catholic clergy remains the last womanless space," and if, as she goes on to say, "throughout the world sisters are the backbone of the parish system," even while "the death of the feminine apostolate ... seems to be inevitable," then the question of the ordination of women should require the attention of the Church on practical grounds, even if the demands of Roman Catholic feminists and the precedents of most other churches (including Reform and even Conservative Judaism) did not make it urgent. Unlike some advocates of women's ordination, however, McNamara is too good a scholar to yield to the temptation of positing some mythical prehistoric time when the church did ordain women as well as men, until a patriarchal conspiracy quashed the practice. Repeatedly she interjects an honest "we can never know" in speaking about the position of women in the primitive church, and she acknowledges explicitly that "the reasons for the exclusion of women [from the clergy] and the process of its execution remain deeply obscure."

Still, the question remains. The long history that McNamara traverses in her remarkable book leads her to include in her answer the prospect of "a less priest-centered church." It is a prospect that would hold, presumably, even if women were to be ordained into the Roman Catholic priesthood. Quite beyond women's ordination, therefore, this history of nuns in Catholicism broaches the radical possibility, as so often before in the "two millennia," that "the spirituality of monasticism may be a powerful response to the failure of sacramental spirituality." In her preface, McNamara affectingly declares: "Like Voltaire, I have grown up to be a secular humanist, yet, like him, I must concede that all I am I owe to my Catholic education." It has served her—and her readers, including this reader—very well.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN is Sterling Professor Emeritus at Yale University. His new book, *Mary Through the Centuries*, has just been published by Yale University Press.

Towards Slouching

BY JAMES WOOD

The Last Thing He Wanted by Joan Didion

(Knopf, 227 pp., $23)

Joan Didion has a nose for the comedy of America, but not an ear for the comedy of Joan Didion. This is not necessarily a weakness: one of the fragrances of her journalism is that her solemn prose straightens an unsolemn culture. But this anxious discipline of style tends toward fastidious melodrama. Didion writes with immense self-consciousness but with little apparent sense of self. She has a habit of speaking about herself with a pomposity that amounts to evasion; the reader begins to wonder if a real human being could possibly breathe inside such armor.

"I am talking here about being a child of my time," is how she starts one essay. Near the end of her essay "Goodbye To All That" she anguishes: "But most particularly I want to explain to you, and in the process perhaps to myself, why I no longer live in New York." Or this, on John Wayne: "I tell you this neither in a spirit of self-revelation nor as an exercise in total recall, but simply to demonstrate that when John Wayne rode through my childhood, and perhaps through yours, he determined forever the shape of certain of our dreams." Note the precision: not just any dreams, but only "certain of our dreams." It is as if the self must be hollowed out, martyred, to obtain a more universal knowledge. The result, too often, is a pyre of false confessions.

In similar fashion, the narrator of Joan Didion's new novel is amazingly self-conscious. But since she seems to have no actual self—we learn hardly anything about her, and she goes unnamed—she is merely self-conscious about self-consciousness. As in some of Didion's

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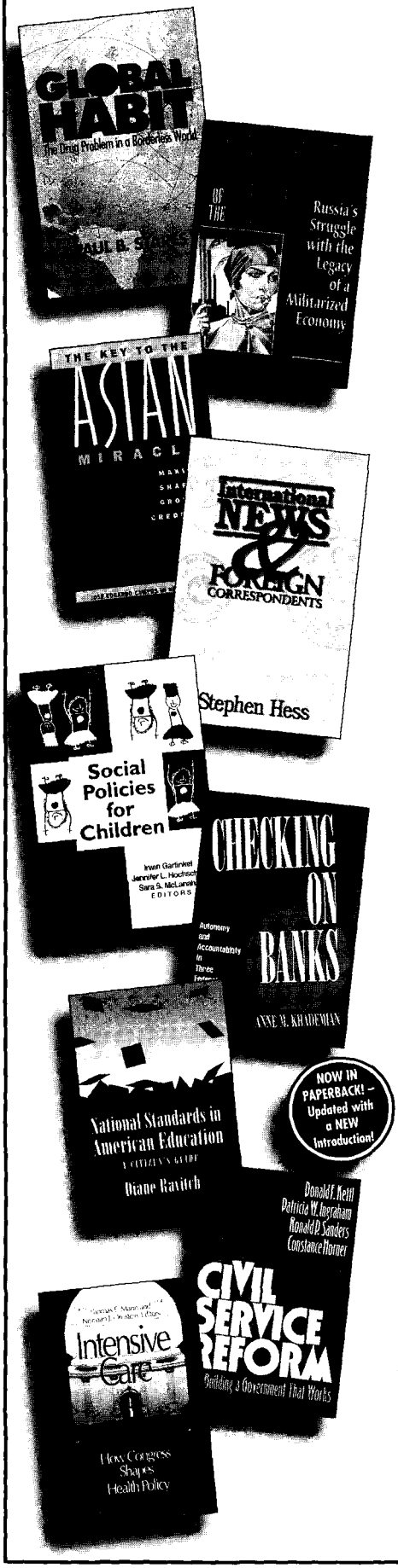

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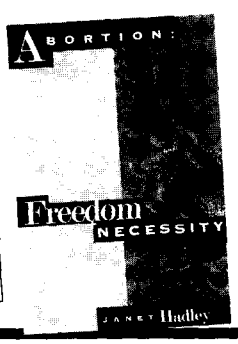

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essays, she is perpetually starting and restarting her tale: "For the record this is me talking. You know me, or think you do. The not quite omniscient author." Thirty pages later we get this: "That would be one place to begin this story." A few pages later: "I still believe in history." And later still: "What we want here is a montage, music over...." And most absurdly: "The persona of 'the writer' does not attract me. As a way of being it has its flat sides. Nor am I comfortable around the literary life...."

It is not clear that the thriller-ish story this writer is trying to begin deserves the dignity of postmodern interruption. Didion may well be straining to borrow some of the convolutions of Conrad's Marlow, the storyteller who tells difficult stories difficultly and treats his readers as if we were sitting at his feet and passing him tobacco. But Marlow has a reality. The problem of *The Last Thing He Wanted* is not that our author is "not quite omniscient"; it is that our narrator is not quite a person. Moreover, she is not telling a difficult story, for all its fog of secrecy, arms-dealing and murder. Didion's tale is a thoroughly conventional one.

Didion's narrator tells her story not like a person, but like an author: she tells it like Joan Didion. And so, instead of telling her story difficultly, she tells it flashily. As in her earlier fiction, particularly *A Book of Common Prayer* (1977) and *Democracy* (1984), hardly a page goes by without portentous one-sentence paragraphs and glistening italics:

> I say so now only because real questions have occurred to me.
> About the events in question.
> About the embassy in question.
> At the time in question.
> *This wasn't a situation that lent itself to an MBA analysis.*
> *This wasn't a zero-sum deal.*

More irritating, and even less human, is the narrator's urge to begin successive sentences with the same words. She resembles a ghost that has been taught to rap:

> I myself learned to be specific during this period.
> I myself learned to be careful.
> I myself learned the art of the conditional.

This stuttering spirit is a journalist. Her story concerns another journalist, Elena McMahon, whom she knew before her death. The "events in question" occur in 1984 and have to do with the American government's illegal plot to arm the contras. As the novel opens,

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Elena McMahon has left her job at *The Washington Post* and is caring for her sick and willful father. From childhood, Elena has known little about her father, except that he is a man who "does deals." He is, in fact, an arms-dealer and appears to be prevented from completing his biggest deal yet—supplying arms, via an unnamed Caribbean island, to the contras—by his hospitalization and recuperation. But he is obsessed that this deal go down. Somewhat implausibly, his daughter offers to act for him.

She has no idea of what lies ahead. She is quickly entrapped. Knowing nothing, except that she has certain people to meet and a paycheck to collect for her father, she is flown first to Costa Rica and then to the unnamed Caribbean island. Sinister forces in the undercover government operation decide that, although she knows nothing, she has seen too much. This is not a regular arms-deal; she has stumbled into something very big and very secret. When she tells a visiting American ambassador, Treat Morrison (who thinks he knows what is going on but only knows half of it), what has happened to her, certain people in Washington decide that it is time that she and the ambassador are silenced.

Despite the narrator's fondness for interruption, Didion moves things on briskly, skillfully. The story has grip. The novel observes the conventions of the paranoid political thriller. These conventions stipulate that everyone is always a step ahead of the victim, who, even when she thinks she is not under surveillance, is always under surveillance. (In this respect, such novels imply, she may resemble the reader.) Similarly, in such plots the victim's allies always turn out to be the victim's enemies; the victim's true friends—a lover, a boyfriend, a parent—will either save the victim (happy ending) or be wounded in a failed attempt to save the victim (sad ending). Didion goes for the sad ending.

As in such thrillers, the jungle of human motivation is suggested by a jungle, and complication is briskly macheted out of the way. Portraiture is thinned, context shaved down to a familiar stubble. (We are told, for instance, that the Caribbean island has "the tedium of all forlorn tropical places." This is code. It means: don't think of a real island. Think of Graham Greene.) Of all the people we meet—shadowy government "representatives," pilots, gun-smugglers, CIA place-men, U.S. ambassadors—hardly one is given physical weight and quiddity. And as in such books, the narrator has an uncanny precision in regard to timing: "According to the clock over the cashier's desk, the man had now been reading the newspapers at my table for eleven minutes." "He was silent for exactly seven seconds." Such precision makes the detail in this book lifelessly technical rather than fictively alive: "The gray-haired woman took a San Salvador newspaper from her Vuitton tote and began reading it."

All of this ensures swift daylight passage; but it should not be confused with literature. For the cost of this speediness is considerable. Since no plausible reason is offered for Elena's decision to enter this world, she drags behind her very little pathos. She seems merely implausibly foolish, so that when American officials (by proxy) kill her off, our outrage is appropriately qualified. Her friend the narrator of this tale is hardly real; Elena is hardly real; and the evil of the American government is hardly real.

What restrains this book from becoming literature is not just its thriller-codes, but its fundamental lack of curiosity. Of course, Didion is very interested in the machinations of the Reagan administration in Central America, and we are punished with inventories of armaments and anthologies of technical jargon. But, although Didion's heroine is discovering fresh unpleasantnesses every hour, these are only forensic discoveries. The writing discovers nothing. Nothing is ever surprising or novel, nothing is truly revelatory, because Didion does not surprise herself.

Didion's narrator is the perfect creation of Didion's knowingness. One could take the novel to be making a point about the knowingness of her narrator, if her narrator were anything more than a robot programmed to write like Joan Didion. Or perhaps one might take Didion to be parodying this world which is itself knowing, if anything in her novel were written in a different register. But even the moments of sentimentality are knowing.

This is partly a matter of imitating the deadpan competence of the thriller, with its spiky substitution for verisimilitude: "There would be nothing out of John Wayne but she could get a redeye out of LAX. Straight shot up the 405.... In the deep nowhere safety of the United lounge she drank two glasses of water and tried to remember her calling card number." Or: "Havana so close you could see the two-tone Impalas on the Malecon." Or: "Wynn was calling from his Mercedes, driving east on Pico, and had turned up Robertson before his voice faded back in." In this world,

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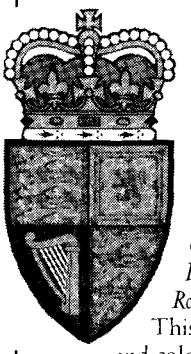

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Havana is rendered by two-tone Impalas, and the Caribbean island by the tedium of all forlorn tropical places. That will do for the purposes of such a narrative.

Worse, Didion is knowing about a world that is itself all knowingness. People in this world speak as if they know everything, like Treat Morrison: "As far as I was concerned ... this was just another kid from the Hill with wacko ideas that any sane person had to know wouldn't get to first base outside the goddamn District of Columbia." Perhaps the Treat Morrisons of the world really do speak like this; but it seems idle of Didion not to make their clichés more interesting. One feels that she has not listened to Morrison as she has listened to the young doctor who appears early in the book to tell Elena that her father is now retired and "after retirement you have to expect a deficit." This is nicely caught; Didion's ear lavishes attention on the young doctor.

But the doctor is not in the know, as Treat Morrison is in the know, and part of Didion's mission in this book is to show us that people such as Treat Morrison do not know as much as they think they do. Didion is knowing at her people's expense, which is fatal to the creation of autonomous characters. She presents her characters to us as if what is enigmatic about them is what is most significant about them, because we are all supposed to recognize this significance. Here, for instance, is how she presents one Bob Weir:

> I had come across him two years before, in 1982, in San Salvador, where he was running not a restaurant but a discotheque, a dispirited place called Chez Roberto.... Within hours of arriving in San Salvador I had begun hearing the name Bob Weir mentioned, always guardedly: it seemed that he was an American with what was called an interesting history, an apparent gift for being in interesting places at interesting times. He happened for example to have been managing an export firm in Guatemala at the time Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown. He happened to have been managing a second export firm, in Managua, at the time the Somoza regime was overthrown. In San Salvador he was said to be particularly close to a distinctly bad actor named Colonel Alvaro Garcia Steiner, who had received special training from the Argentinian military in domestic counterterrorism, at the time a local specialty.

Though this seems plain enough, it is esoterica. For it is written in code. Didion's narrator can afford to be knowingly restrained about Bob Weir because we all know what an "interesting history" means. Bob Weir is a spy, so the information given by the narrator has another layer of meaning. It is not a discotheque that Weir was running in San Salvador; it is not an export firm that he was running in Managua. These are fronts. But neither this latent layer, nor the patent layer, Didion's informational topsoil, is interesting or vivacious. Since Didion knows that we are in the know about Bob Weir, she relaxes her notation of Bob Weir's life so that she does not have to make him truly mysterious. He is not mysterious, because he represents only a solved code, the same code that, elsewhere, Didion's narrator speaks of thus: "There are people who understand this kind of transaction and there are people who do not. Those who understand it are at heart storytellers, weavers of conspiracy...." Didion understands this kind of transaction.

There is nothing especially weak here within the coop of the conspiracy-thriller. But when we look at similar characters in Conrad, the novelist of intrigue and conspiracy who is so obviously Didion's model, we can register the loss. It is the difference between a novelist who knows the world and a novelist who knows about the world. Conrad's world of political conspiracy is not created conspiratorially. First, Conrad notices his characters visually, their punished exteriors, while Didion merely scans their political skeletons. In *Lord Jim*, for instance, we encounter "the fellow fresh from Madagascar" who fastens onto Marlow: "He had globular eyes starting out of his head with a fishy glitter, bumps on his forehead, and wore his long hair brushed back without a parting. He had a favourite phrase which he kept on repeating triumphantly, 'The minimum of risk with the maximum of profit is my motto. What?'" Or Stein, the merchant and butterfly collector: "His history was curious," begins Marlow, and a real life begins to stream from the page. "He had been born in Bavaria, and when a youth of twenty-two had taken an active part in the revolutionary movement of 1848. Heavily compromised, he managed to make his escape, and at first found a refuge with a poor republican watchmaker in Trieste. From there he made his way to Tripoli with a stock of cheap watches to hawk about..." and on and on. Stein is a man with an interesting history. But he is not a man with "what is called an interesting history," because Conrad does not concern himself with public narratives that we all know, but with private narratives that we do not know. As a result, Conrad's details have an accidental shimmer, while Didion's have a purposeful polish.

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Since Didion's details are "mysterious," they do not even begin to be truly mysterious. They have no strangeness; they are merely suspicious. The danger of knowingness is that it bullies narratives into parochialism: it announces that there is nothing else to know outside the astonishing competence of the narrative. *The Last Thing He Wanted* certainly has a kind of competence. But it gives little evidence of being interested in the unencoded world, the world beyond its conspiracy. It has the deep provincialism of paranoia. In political terms, the sinister imperialism of which Didion's narrator tells may be massive; but in fictional terms, this is a negligible parish. •

Natural Born Killer

BY EUGENE D. GENOVESE

The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive edited by Richard Pipes

(Yale University Press, 204 pp., $27.50)

As every schoolboy knows, Josef Stalin was a terrible man who did terrible things. He thereby besmirched the memory of St. Vladimir, Russia's closest equivalent to St. Francis of Assisi, and betrayed the legacy of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, whose mantle he claimed. Now before Vladimir's canonization the Enemies of the People had slandered him too, and in much the same way. Contrasting him with his idol, St. Karl, they accused him of besmirching Marx's memory and betraying his legacy of democratic socialism. It seems that Lenin the Bolshevik suppressed the freedom, the democracy and the human liberation for which Marx the socialist always stood. But a small problem arose. Lenin turned out to be a big winner—a political leader of genius who led the first great socialist revolution in world history. And so the legend of St. Vladimir grew apace.

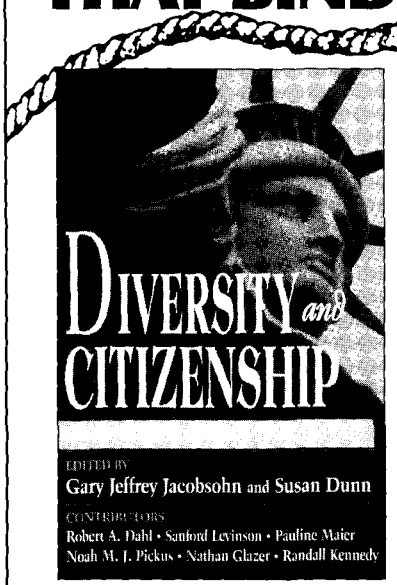
For Western intellectuals, Leon Trotsky performed the rites of Lenin's beatification and Stalin's concomitant damnation, in self-serving and often dishonest polemics designed to explain his own failures. Meanwhile nasty right-wingers were arguing that Stalin was in fact Lenin's true heir, much as Lenin was Marx's true heir, and that each represented a stage in the development of a totalitarian ideology to which all three and their legions subscribed. Right-wing Sovietologists have insisted that Lenin's regime prefigured Stalin's mass murders, his brutal suppression of freedom, secret-police apparatus and the rest. Most left-wingers in the West, by contrast, have had to exalt Lenin as the epitome of the revolution that Stalin betrayed. For, if a continuity between Lenin and Stalin could be established, and, worse, if both could be shown to have been good Marxists, then honest people might reassess the very ideological foundations of socialism and not only Marxist socialism.

For good reason, then, the left takes a dim view of Richard Pipes, an adviser to Ronald Reagan who long served as a distinguished historian of Russia and the Soviet Union at Harvard. But much of the right also finds him distasteful: during the cold war he had the temerity to insist that the Soviet Union had feet of clay, that it was unraveling because of what Marxists call "internal contradictions" and that American foreign policy should be oriented to the application of maximum pressure. Most right-wing politicians and intellectuals did not believe Pipes, and they did not exactly ooze gratitude when events made him look good.

Now Pipes offers a collection of documents that shed much light on Lenin's character and politics. Most of these texts have never before been published, though some of them, including the most disturbing ones, made it into the Russian press when Boris Yeltsin partially opened the archives of the Soviet Communist Party. These 116 letters, memoranda and other papers give a taste of the thousands of documents that never got into the five editions of the *Collected Works* published under the watchful eye of the Politburo.

Yury A. Buranov, the Russian editor of *The Unknown Lenin*, enters some demurrals in a preface. "Though concurring with many of the positions Richard Pipes has advanced in the Introduction to the volume," he writes, "as well as in his commentaries on Lenin's texts, we

THE TIES THAT BIND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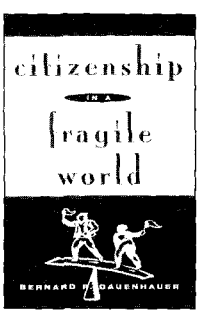

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reserve the right to maintain our own perspective on them." Buranov notes that some of the documents may have been falsified and that other documents, yet to be found, may require a further alteration in our evaluation of Lenin. Indeed, during the cold war, world-famous scholars assured us of the authenticity of the Litvinov Diaries, among other items that turned out to be CIA forgeries. In this case, however, Pipes's own work (and much else in a large literature) establishes an overwhelming case for the main point. Pipes has performed an inestimable service in preparing and editing this important, repugnant volume.

Pipes repeatedly expresses outrage over Lenin's words and actions, which is understandable. Yet his outrage blurs the essentials of his own argument. He is so determined to destroy Lenin's image as a revolutionary saint that he sometimes comes dangerously close to obscuring what I believe he knows to constitute the heart of the matter: the nature of revolutionary saints. There is no point in condemning people for adhering to a murderous ideology and then condemning them for doing what that ideology requires. There is no point in berating Lenin for having acted like a savage, since savagery is what has always distinguished the saints of social revolution.

The book's dust jacket, paraphrasing Pipes, asks a pointless question: "Was Lenin a visionary whose ideals were subverted by his followers? Or was he a cynical misanthrope, even crueler than Stalin?" The question becomes pointless when one remembers that Lenin was a social revolutionary. He was not some campus windbag who, with clenched fist raised, engages in illegal acts secure in the knowledge that, if the seizure of a building does not lead to the overthrow of the hated establishment, he can expect no few concessions and media tributes to his "courage" and his "idealism." Lenin played *va banque*. When he issued his "April Theses" and made his bid for power, he attached no codicil that begged for amnesty if the coup ended badly. He was ready to kill his opponents, and he knew what to expect if he lost.

Let us begin with a few embarrassments, one of which inspires mirth. A long-suppressed document—a Transcript of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Deputies of the Simbirsk Nobility, in 1886—will discomfort true believers, since it provides proof "of [Lenin's] rights to hereditary nobility." The greatest tribune of the proletariat in the history of the world had an aristocratic lineage. Other documents show that Lenin initiated the policy of suppressing and exiling dissident intellectuals, most notably those of the left. Here is his letter to Stalin of July 17, 1922:

> Comrade Stalin!
>
> On the matter of deporting the Mensheviks, Popular Socialists, Kadets, and the like from Russia, I would like to ask several questions in view of the fact that this operation, initiated before my leave, has not been completed to this day.
>
> Resolutely to "uproot" all Popular Socialists? Peshekhonov, Miakotin, Gornfeld?, Petrishchev, and the others. I think all of them should be deported. They are more harmful than any SR, because more cunning.
>
> Also A.N. Potresov, Izgoev, and *the entire* staff of *Ekonomist* (*Ozerov* and *many, many others*). Mensheviks: Rozanov (a physician, cunning), Vigdorchik (Migulo or some name like that), Lyubov Nikolaevna Radchenko and her young daughter (said to be malicious enemies of Bolshevism); N. A. Rozhkov (he must be deported; he is incorrigible); S.A. Frank (author of *Metodologiia*). A commission under the supervision of Mantsev, Messing, and others should submit a list of several *hundred* such gentlemen, who must be deported abroad without mercy. We will purge Russia for a long time to come.
>
> Regarding Lezhnev (formerly of *Den'*), we should reflect a great deal about whether he should not be deported. He *will always be extremely crafty*, as far as I can judge from the articles of his that I have read.
>
> Ozerov, like *the entire* staff of *Ekonomist*, are the most ruthless enemies. The lot—out of Russia.
>
> This must be done at once. Before the end of the trial of the SRs—no later. Arrest several hundred and *without stating* the reasons—out with you, gentlemen!
>
> All the authors from *Dom literatorov* [House of writers] and the Petrograd *Mysl'*; Kharkov should be ransacked—*we don't know it*, it is a "foreign country" for us. We must purge *quickly, no later* than by the end of the SRs' trial.
>
> Note the literary figures in Petrograd (addresses in *Novaia russkaia kniga*, no. 4, 1922, p.37) and the list of private publishers (p.29).
>
> With communist greetings,
> Lenin

Lenin also pioneered the incarceration of political unreliables in mental institutions. He seems to have suspected that they suffered from mental disorders. In fact, he demanded that Politburo members submit to examinations by German doctors, who, you will be relieved to learn, pronounced Stalin perfectly sound.

Still other documents indicate that, for tactical reasons during the civil war between Reds and Whites, Lenin facilitated the Allied landings at Murmansk, which have long been viewed as unvarnished Western aggression. And we get clues of the extent to which the Soviets were financing left-wing groups abroad, not only Communist parties but also useful social-democratic and "peace" groups. But what professedly international revolutionary movement would not move heaven and earth to support its comrades abroad? If the indictment of Lenin depends upon evidence that he resorted to "revolutionary deception," it will not add up to much.

At least Lenin, the master of revolutionary deception, did not often lie to himself, which is more than we can say for those Western leftists who were on the pad. Then, as now, revolutionaries have always known how to manipulate liberal, progressive, idealistic journalists and intellectuals who fiercely denounce "red-baiting" while they call their critics "fascists," "reactionaries" and "bigots." Self-programmed to believe whatever

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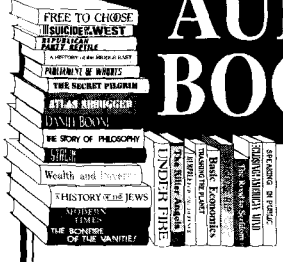

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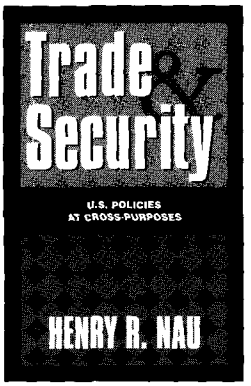

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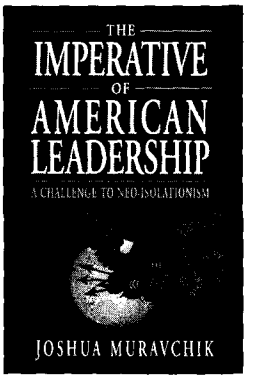

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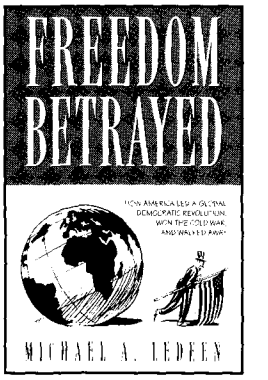

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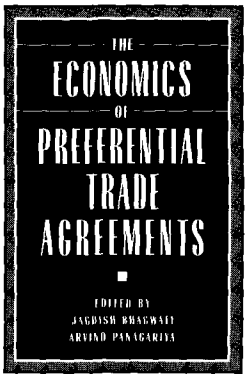

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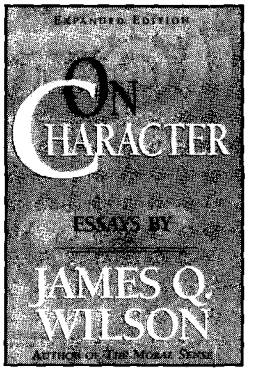

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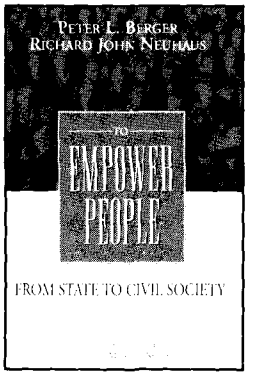

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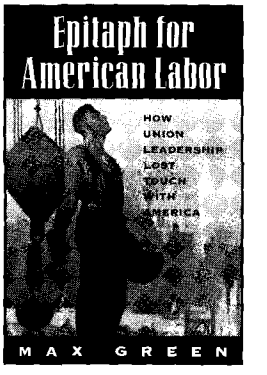

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imbecilities their ideology and their careers require, they convince themselves of the truth of the lies that they are paid to disseminate and even to invent. (How else could sane people not laugh at the blatant mendacity that blacks cannot be racists because they lack power? Recall that many of the vilest racists and reactionaries in history came from among the most wretched and powerless elements in society.) Give Lenin and Stalin credit. They knew their "useful idiots," and they were always ready to betray them. Lenin's contempt for his Western admirers was expressed not least by his repeated urgings that they be paid well.

In 1920 a delegation of Laborites from Britain arrived to cement relations. Lenin ordered the Party to extend a formal welcome and to keep up appearances; but secretly he ordered the Laborites to be kept under strict surveillance and subjected to every possible harassment by party stalwarts at public meetings. Stalin's assertion that social democrats were "social fascists" had ample precedent in his predecessor: Lenin ordered the press to expose the British Laborites as "social traitors, Mensheviks, accomplices of British colonial plunder, and so on." These "guests," as he derisively called them, should be invited to lecture at as many factories as possible and be greeted by hostile questions from workers. "The campaign of discreditation should not be directed at all the guests. On the contrary, their leftist and rightist elements should be distinguished, so that the former refute the latter. The campaign of discreditation must clearly emanate from below and not be obviously inspired by us. Therefore, the press must be restricted to calm, objective, factual reporting about the guests that will serve as material for the campaign of discreditation." And so on. Lenin made clear that a principal objective should be to provoke a split in the British labor movement.

Some matters transcend embarrassment. In 1918, Lenin reacted to an uprising in five "Kulak" districts: "It should be *mercilessly* suppressed.... Hang (hang without fail, so *the people see*) *no fewer than one hundred* known kulaks, rich men, bloodsuckers.... Do it in such a way that for hundreds of versts around [a verst is approximately one kilometer] the people will see, tremble, know, shout: *they are strangling* and will strangle to death the bloodsucker kulaks." In 1919, he instructed a subordinate: "Discuss separately with extreme care how to seize the oil in Guriev. This is imperative. Use both bribery and threats to exterminate every Cossack to a man if they set fire to the oil in Guriev." Pipes expresses disgust that Lenin gave orders "to burn Baku to the ground" rather than let it fall into enemy hands. But, as Pipes well knows, that is what revolutionaries do. (Come to think of it, if Hood and Lee had given such orders about Atlanta and Richmond, the Confederacy might have been able to turn its war for survival around. As Allen Tate complained in his condemnation of Lee for not waging a revolutionary war, that is what serious revolutionaries are supposed to do.)

Lenin's accomplishments will probably go down in history with those of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, but even this paragon of tough-mindedness could fall prisoner to ideological dreams and political hopes. He did deceive himself on a few big matters. His dogged insistence that the West, including England, was on the verge of revolution makes a reader wonder what was in his head. One of the most extraordinary documents in this book is Lenin's evaluation of the war with the Poles in 1920. It indicates that he was planning to send the Red Army across Europe in a war of revolutionary aggression. "The defensive period of the war with worldwide imperialism was over, and we could, and had the obligation to, exploit the military situation to launch an offensive war. We had defeated them when they advanced against us; we would now try to advance

History

I too could give my heart to history.
I too could turn to it for illumination,
For a definition of who we are, what it means to live here
Breathing this atmosphere at the end of the century.
I too could agree we aren't pilgrims
Resting for the night at a roadside hermitage,
Uncertain about the local language and customs,
But more like the bushes and trees around us
Sprung from this soil, nurtured by the annual rainfall
And the slant of the sun in our temperate latitudes.

If only history didn't side with survivors,
The puny ones who in times of famine
Can live on nothing, or the big and greedy.
If only it didn't conclude that the rebels who take the fort
Must carry the flag of the future in their knapsacks,
While the rebels who fail have confused their babel
With the voice of the people, which announces by instinct
The one and only path to posterity.

The people are far away in the provinces
With their feet on the coffee table
Leafing through magazines on barbecuing and sailing.
They're dressing to go to an uncle's funeral,
To a daughter's rehearsal dinner. They're listening,
As they drive to work, to the radio.
Caesar's ad on law and order seems thoughtful.
Brutus's makes some useful points about tyranny.
But is either candidate likely to keep his promises?

When ice floes smashed the barges on the Delaware
And Washington drowned with all his men, it was clear
To the world the revolt he led against excise taxes
And import duties was an over-reaction.
When the South routed the North at Gettysburg,
It was clear the scheme of merchants to impose their values
On cotton planters was doomed from the start
Along with Lincoln's mystical notion of union,
Which sadly confused the time-bound world we live in
With a world where credos don't wear out.

CARL DENNIS

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against them...." And why not? That is what revolutionary armies are for.

Pipes suggests that Lenin was setting the pace for Stalin's alleged plans to conquer Europe. Maybe. These documents say only that Lenin considered the Russian Revolution the opening of a worldwide proletarian revolution, which the Red Army was honor-bound to assist. And that is no surprise. Lenin cut deals with the extreme right in Germany in order to build a front against the imperialist powers and the Treaty of Versailles, and Pipes sees a straight line to the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Here and elsewhere, Pipes may read too much ideology into Lenin's *raison d'état*, especially in view of the long history of non-ideological German-Russian relations in containing Britain and France. And the totalitarian right and left have often cooperated in the expectation that each could use the other as a cat's paw. Both Lenin and Stalin knew that the fate of the world revolution depended upon the defense of the Soviet Union. As men who were simultaneously revolutionaries and leaders of a nation-state they did what they had to do.

That some of Lenin's remarks to his Politburo comrades contradicted his public pronouncements and promises should outrage us less than it does Pipes, who can get a bit sanctimonious. After all, Lenin always asserted that it was right and proper to indulge in revolutionary deception with the imperialists and other class enemies. Unfortunately, he also preached absolute honesty among comrades of the vanguard party, and here he ran into trouble. For he lived in a century that was already undergoing a revolution in communications and, since everything leaked, it was impossible to lie to the one without having to lie to the other. Lenin could only speak honestly to a handful of trusted lieutenants and not always to all of them. He had to deceive almost everyone: friend, foe, Bolshevik.

With ample justification, Pipes insists that Lenin held human life cheap, though he credits him with concern for the well-being of a few old comrades. (The same cannot be said of Stalin.) Pipes plausibly suggests that Lenin would have sacrificed half the human race to lay the foundations for a radiant future for the other half. (If someone wishes to change the ratio from 1:1 to 10:1, I will not argue.) Mao Tse-tung, a great Leninist if ever there was one, made no bones about his own attitude. When Palmiro Togliatti, the Italian Communist leader, protested that Mao's policies, if pressed to their logical con-

dissent

Fall 1996

The Democrats—ascendant and adrift.
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clusion, would end in the destruction of the Italian people, Mao shrugged. So who needs Italians? I do wonder how anyone can doubt that Lenin would have made the same trade-off.

The most fascinating document in this book is a letter of March 19, 1922, from Lenin to Molotov for circulation to the Politburo. Its subject is religion and the church. Lenin believed, or pretended to believe, that Patriarch Tikhon of the Russian Orthodox Church was plotting with "Black Hundreds" and assorted other reactionaries to overthrow the regime. It is true that Tikhon was denouncing the Bolshevik suppression of religion, but there is no evidence of his joining any such conspiracy, if one in fact existed. At Shuia, a textile town 300 kilometers northeast of Moscow, Christians defended themselves against a wave of physical assaults on their churches, and several were killed when Red Army soldiers fired into the crowd. Lenin, demanding that the Party respond ruthlessly, specified two objectives: to break the back of the religious community by the execution of thousands of its leaders, and to confiscate church valuables "so as to secure for ourselves a fund of several hundred million gold rubles," which he insisted was absolutely essential to finance social reconstruction.

Well, that is what revolutionaries do. But in this letter to Molotov he left nothing to the imagination. He argued forcefully that no more favorable moment could be hoped for. Why? Because Russia was suffering a famine of ghastly proportions: "It is precisely now and only now, when in the starving regions people are eating human flesh, and hundreds if not thousands of corpses are littering the roads, that we can (and therefore must) carry out the confiscation of church valuables with the most savage and ruthless energy." The peasants, he explained, either will be angry enough at the inability of the Church to relieve their suffering and will therefore support the repression, or they will be so distracted that they will remain neutral. The campaign "must be carried out in the most energetic fashion and in the briefest possible time because the masses will not tolerate prolonged application of brutality." He demanded the execution of clergymen on mere suspicion and specified that trials "be conducted with the maximum of speed and end in no other way than execution by firing squad of a very large number of the most influential and dangerous Black Hundreds in Shuia, and to the extent possible not only in that city but in Moscow and several other clerical centers." Historians have estimated that, as a consequence of this letter of Lenin's, 8,000 people were murdered.

An excellent Marxist and a genuine revolutionary, Lenin had no time for sentiment. Humanity's past ("the old crap," as Marx called it) was a long tale of ruling-class oppression, which rendered the lives of the degraded masses worthless. Good revolutionaries know what they must do. Revolutionaries will lay down their lives to liberate the people from their oppressive history and to allow them to fulfill themselves as autonomous human beings. As grand visions go, this vision of world revolution has its appeal, at least for people who can talk themselves into believing that they can remake the human race.

Was Lenin as great a monster as Stalin? Maxim Gorky, who knew and supported both, remarked that Lenin was the more ruthless one. But that question, as Molotov said of fascism when he signed the pact with Hitler, is a matter of taste. Before we hear cries that these documents may have been forged or altered, let us ask a different question. Why should Lenin, a militant atheist who read Dostoevsky, not have laughed at the famous question, "If God does not exist, is not everything lawful?" Lenin made his position crystal clear: any act that advances the revolutionary struggle is moral; any act that impedes the revolutionary struggle is immoral. Lenin the Marxist scorned absolute truth and philosophical foundationalism. He embraced what Marxists then called "class truth" (and postmodernists now call "situational truth"). So why should he not have done all these things, and more? Here was a political leader for whom ideas really mattered.

EUGENE D. GENOVESE is the author of *The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War* (University of Missouri Press).

Saint Elsewhere

BY COLIN MCGINN

Living High and Letting Die: Our Illusion of Innocence by Peter Unger

(Oxford University Press, 187 pp., $39.95)

It is an undeniable and troubling fact that the world contains people of vastly different degrees of wealth and well-being. The most glaring discrepancies exist between the citizens of advanced economies such as our own and the inhabitants of the developing world. In the poor countries of the earth, millions of children die annually for lack of basic medical and nutritional resources that are ridiculously cheap by the standards of the average American or European. By contributing only a few dollars to a recognized charity, such as OXFAM or UNICEF, each of us could save the lives of many children. About 3 million children die each year of dehydrating diarrhea, and this can be prevented with packets of oral rehydration salts that cost a mere 15 cents a packet; with a few of these and some necessary overheads we can each save a life for well under $5. Yet very few of us donate much if any money to the charities that carry out the necessary lifesaving work; and we do not regard ourselves as moral monsters for being in this way tight. Is this complacency morally justified?

Peter Unger is a philosopher noted for his defense of paradoxical and extreme positions: that nobody knows anything, that there are no people, that nothing is flat. Generally, these positions have been backed by logical-sounding but ultimately specious arguments. Unger, the *enfant incroyable*. In his new book he moves into applied moral philosophy to take on an issue of profound practical importance, our duties to the poor and the suffering of the world. He holds that these duties are much greater than we commonly acknowledge. This is his conclusion: "On pain of living a life that's seriously immoral, a typical well-off person, like you and me, must give away most of her financially valuable assets, and much of her income, directing the funds to lessen efficiently the serious suffering of others."

Moral earnestness and casuistical tenacity are generously on display in Unger's book, and the argument is never less than strenuous; but the faults of the book are great. It is unattractively written in a kind of academic slang of

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Unger's own devising ("It's plenty obvious that, in the Vintage Sedan, there's plenty of urgency"); and far too many of Unger's sentences need to be reread in order to parse their tortured grammar. It is also extremely tedious for long stretches, as Unger pores over his imaginary examples in a parody of rigor. Many of these examples are ghoulish in the ardor with which they discuss slicing off people's feet and legs with knives and trolley wheels. Most importantly, Unger simply fails to address the philosophical issues that need to be addressed if his conclusions are to be credible. The result is a curious blend of aggressive compassion and purblind ratiocination. *Living High and Letting Die* makes its own cause look as if it rests upon very questionable assumptions. I agree (who wouldn't agree?) with the suggestion that we should do more to help the needy of the world; but the arguments that Unger employs to this end strike me as wrongheaded. There is a certain lack of realism about them. They have the dusty aroma of the philosophical blackboard.

Not giving substantial amounts of money to Third World charities, Unger argues, is morally equivalent to letting a drowning child die, when all it will cost you to save her is a wet suit of clothes. It is, in short, very wrong indeed. We are deluded about the extent of our serious moral obligations, taking them to be much narrower than they are. "To behave in a way that's not seriously wrong, a well-off person, like you and me, must contribute to vitally effective groups, like OXFAM and UNICEF, most of the money and property she now has, and most of what comes her way for the foreseeable future." And the underlying reason, Unger contends, is that we are obliged to help to relieve suffering, wherever and to whomever it occurs, except when this would result in greater suffering on our or someone else's part.

Unger hopes to establish this principle by considering comparable problem cases and then arguing by analogy. Thus we have, among dozens of others, the case of the Vintage Sedan. You come across an injured traveler who needs a ride in your car to a hospital, to receive treatment that will prevent his leg from having to be amputated; but his blood will stain the leather of your prized automobile, costing you money and some aesthetic distress. Clearly you should give him a ride, despite the cost to yourself. By analogy, Unger suggests, you should give money to a charity that saves the legs and the lives of distant children. Their distance from you, their inconspicuousness, the large number of them: none of this spoils the analogy. In both cases, it is your duty to relieve whatever suffering it is within your power to relieve, assuming that the cost to you is not catastrophic. (You don't have to give your leg to save his leg.) Morally, it is as bad not to put that check in the mail to OXFAM as it would be to leave the injured traveler in the road—more so, indeed, since more is at stake.

Unger also thinks that we have a duty to sacrifice the well-being of others in order to help third parties. You can amputate the foot of an innocent bystander if the result is a serum that cures many children of some otherwise incurable disease. You can divert a rogue trolley from its path toward six people if the alternative route kills only three people. You can steal money from a millionaire so long as you donate it to charity. Why? Because you are minimizing the total amount of suffering in the world, and that is your prime moral duty.

This is a clear application of the fundamental precept of utilitarianism, the doctrine that our duty is to maximize the amount of happiness in the world and to minimize the amount of unhappiness. Despite his ingenious and complicated examples, the utilitarian precept is really what Unger's argument relies upon. But he never forthrightly acknowledges the utilitarian underpinnings of his position, though they leap from the page at every turn. There is no systematic discussion of the plausibility of the kind of utilitarianism that Unger is presupposing, no rebuttal of the arguments that can be mounted against it. He gives the impression that he hopes you won't notice the utilitarianism lurking in the background; or maybe he just cannot see any alternative to it. So let me point out some of the difficulties that afflict Unger's simple utilitarian precept.

For a start, it is important to note the extremes to which this kind of principle can lead us once it has been given free rein. Unger focuses on Third World children, but these are not the only potential beneficiaries of the maxim that we should sacrifice our own well-being for the good of others in greater need. Consider the unborn, the future generations that will eventually inhabit the planet: they, too, will suffer unless we set aside resources for them. Should you contribute a large portion of your income to a charity whose aim is the dissemination of such money to people who do not yet exist? Think how many people that would involve. And if the money is distributed fairly, not favoring

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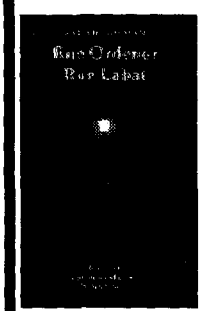

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currently existing people, then you will actually be giving little to actually existing sufferers, despite your own drastic impoverishment. In fact, you will be giving less than you do now, by any plausible reckoning. But this means that, by Unger's reasoning, we should be doing less to help the existing poor of the world, since our fine utilitarian concern must be with the numberless millions who will certainly exist and will certainly suffer unless we now do something for them. Their mere temporal distance from us makes no more moral difference, by Unger's utilitarian lights, than the spatial distance of children in Africa. (I am not saying that we have no duties at all toward the unborn, but presumably few would be willing to claim that we now have the duty to reduce our own quality of life to the barely tolerable so as to provide for the future poor who will come to be.)

It is a remarkable omission that Unger never so much as mentions this kind of problem, though he is surely aware of the issues raised for utilitarianism by future generations. And the same point goes for animals and maybe also aliens from space. Should we sacrifice our own well-being to support charities that seek out hungry and suffering animals and give them sustenance, making sure that they are all as materially well off as we are? Is it really as wrong not to do this as to beat a dog with a stick for no good reason? Should we increase funding for space research on the grounds that there may be aliens out there who are hungry and diseased and could benefit from our charity? Is failing to do this morally equivalent to murdering your neighbor? Viewed simply in terms of your power over the well-being of others, there is nothing to choose here, as Unger correctly insists—but the moral difference is surely enormous. The lesson is that you cannot measure moral culpability by the utilitarian precept alone.

If this point is not yet clear, then consider that utilitarian principles combined with Ungerian analogies can yield even more bizarre results. Suppose you see an old lady burdened with heavy shopping bags and you stop to help her carry them: what you did was right and good, and not doing it would have been bad. But does that mean that you have an equivalent duty to send large amounts of your income to a charity dedicated to helping old ladies carry their shopping bags? Ditto for people with nettle stings or bad backs or cold hands. Since the relief offered is the same whether by charity or directly, Ungerian utilitarianism enjoins you to hand over the cash.

It may be retorted that we must accept these implications, strange as they may seem, since the utilitarian principle captures our True Values, to which we are oddly blind; and so we need radically to revise our moral attitudes in the direction it dictates. But notice how much else that we value would have to be sacrificed if we took this advice seriously. If we really lived by the principle that enjoins each of us to reduce our standard of living to such a point that nobody was better off than we were, by donating most of our income to charity—which is what Unger is suggesting—then not only would the entire economy soon collapse, but we would be forbidden to pay for even modest health care for our children, to educate them beyond a minimal level, to pursue the arts and sciences, to engage in any form of recreation that costs money, and so on. Pushing Unger's position to its logical conclusion results in massive conflicts of value, as we strive to ensure that no one is worse off than ourselves. Remember, Unger's position really is that you must send any money to charity that will result in someone's life being saved, so long as you do not die as a result.

But we don't want to live in a world in which all these values are sacrificed to generalized altruism; and we are right to reject such a world. Such a descent into sainthood is not what human life should be about. If I were to accept Unger's arguments, I would now have to sell my house, resign my job, live on the street, no longer support my son, eat only oatmeal—all on the grounds that there are others in Africa who are worse off than I would be. For, insists Unger, "it's seriously wrong not to send to the likes of UNICEF and OXFAM, about as promptly as possible, nearly all of your worldly wealth." What is seriously wrong, I think, is the principle that leads to such a conclusion, since it conflicts with so much else of value.

Unger will retort that, if I am to be consistent in my moral reasoning, I must agree that not helping the injured traveler or the drowning child is morally acceptable, since these are cases of sacrificing some of my well-being for the greater well-being of others. What is the relevant difference, he will ask, between the charity case and these other cases? To which I say that it is not very difficult to answer this question once the unthinking utilitarianism has been bracketed, though the answer will not please those who look for simple and crisp rules in deciding moral problem cases.

The fact is that we require only that opportunistic altruism be practiced. The reasonable assumption of our moral life is that we should help people out when and only when the occasion demands it, and we judge such an occasion not simply by the need that presents itself but also by the context in which it presents itself. The world contains much suffering, which we all agree is a bad thing; but really we cannot be expected to deal with all of it. We can be expected to deal with the suffering that comes our way.

It is essential here that the cases not be frequent and endless, or we start on the slippery slope toward excessive self-sacrifice and conflicts of value. The case of the drowning child or the injured traveler is a case that does not arise constantly, requiring me to drop everything and devote myself exclusively to remedying the situation; just as I do not have to spend all day every day helping old ladies carry shopping bags. If there were many such cases crossing my path day in and day out, preventing me from doing anything else, then my obligation to help would lapse.

We should be generous when the occasion presents itself, not whenever we become aware of some suffering somewhere. Thus, I should help the lady with the bags walking in front of me, but I am not required to hang around all day outside the supermarket in case I should spot a burdened shopper. The reason is that, if I were to go by the wider principle, my life would become intolerable and much of value would have to be sacrificed by me. Thus there is a crucial difference between the charity case and the other cases. Morality requires that I offer relief to those I encounter; it does not require that I undertake the project of reducing the quality of my life to that of the poorest among us.

This is the proposition to which Unger is committed: if I were homeless and down to my last $5, I should donate it to OXFAM and save a child's life, while myself going hungry for a day (or letting my own child do so), and if I do not do this I am as bad as someone who refuses to get wet in order to save a drowning child. Only a philosopher in the grip of a theory could seriously defend a view that has such preposterous consequences. The truth is that saving the drowning child is not based upon some perfectly general impersonal utilitarian principle that tells me to ensure that I am not better off than anyone else; it is based on the fact that I am personally confronted by an emergency that calls for prompt action on my part. There is no logical transition from our judgment in this case to Unger's extreme position on the moral weight of requests for charity. Jesus Christ saw the

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limits of utilitarianism when he excused the costly anointing of his feet with perfumed oil with the remark that the poor will always be with us.

So how much money should we give to charities such as OXFAM? Is the standard small (or nonexistent) donation morally defensible? No, it is not. I have not been arguing for a complacent attitude toward this question. My objection has been to Unger's particular case for excoriating our stinginess, and to the extremes he recommends. My unoriginal and unexciting opinion is that our governments should give more of our tax dollars for foreign aid, and that we as individuals should give more, too; but I do not believe that these promptings issue from some perfectly general principle of utility, or that they are the early stages of a progress toward saintliness.

I think simply that we should be more charitable than we are prone to be, that is, we should give more to causes that we are not morally obliged to give to. For that is what the idea of charity implies: generosity. Not giving to charity betokens a lack of generosity, which is indeed a vice; but ungenerosity is not equivalent to an act of straightforward moral negligence. There are extreme cases, of course, in which I have a moral obligation more basic than generosity. If I refuse to save the drowning child, that hardly counts as a case of being ungenerous; it is a far more serious failing. Very rich people should—and sometimes do—give millions to charity, because they have a lot of money and it is generous to do so; it shows a proper commitment to the important virtue of charity. But the virtue of charity is only what it is. It is not another name for a binding moral obligation of the child-saving variety. Unger, in effect, strives to erase the distinction between charity and obligation, expunging the concept of generosity from his moral repertory, and therein lies his mistake.

It is a dangerous mistake to elide the distinction between murder and uncharitableness, since this is liable to weaken our condemnation of murder and other abominations. By flattening our usual moral distinctions, Unger risks blunting our vital moral assessments. By the end of his book, it is impossible not to feel that a love of paradox and a variety of intellectual shock-tactics have ridden roughshod over our finer and truer moral sensibilities and tainted the deadly serious subject of the world's wretched and the world's poor.

COLIN MCGINN is professor of philosophy at Rutgers University.

TRB *continued from page 6*

Borrowed from similar language in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, clause (c) was included to allow sex-based distinctions in narrow circumstances that nearly everyone supports. The state constitution shouldn't require the state to let male prison guards conduct body searches of female inmates, for example, nor should it forbid single-sex sports teams in public universities. For nearly a year, however, Erwin Chemerinsky of the University of Southern California has been arguing that clause (c) would supersede California's current equal protection clause, which the California Supreme Court has construed to say that sex discrimination should be treated just as suspiciously as race discrimination.

Chemerinsky's arguments are tendentious and implausible, even by the standards of partisan debates. Clause (c) says that "nothing in this section" will prohibit bona fide qualifications based on sex. It would have no effect on *other* sections of the state constitution, such as the equal protection clause, that prohibit sex discrimination. It's similarly farfetched to argue, as Chemerinsky does, that clause (c) would give courts the power to uphold any sex discrimination that they consider "reasonable." If anything, clause (c) might make it easier for the state to discriminate in favor of women, rather than against them, setting up single-sex girls' schools, for example, as a bona fide qualification in public education.

A group of law professors, many of whom oppose CCRI (as I do) because it would reduce the percentage of minority students at Berkeley from 7 to 2 percent, have signed a letter repudiating Chemerinsky's arguments, in the name of "accuracy in public discourse." Unfortunately, public discourse has already been distorted. Democrats who should know better, including President Clinton and Senator Dianne Feinstein, have opposed CCRI on the spurious ground that it would, as George Stephanopoulos put it, "weaken protections against discrimination against women."

In the long run, defenders of affirmative action can only hurt their cause by changing the subject from race to gender. The affirmative action debate in California and in Congress shows the dangers of transforming programs originally targeted at African Americans into a pork barrel of giveaways for groups that have no moral claim to compensation. Crude appeals by special interests may convince skittish legislators to preserve programs that have drifted from their moorings. But citizens themselves, in California at least, are unlikely to be so easily fooled.

JEFFREY ROSEN

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Long goodbye

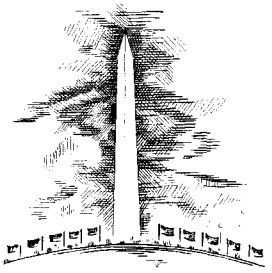
MY MOTHER DIED THIS SUMMER IN a nursing home after two severe strokes. Her death saddened me, but it also brought a certain relief, not simply because it ended her suffering, but because it alleviated my fears that I would have to choose between my mother's welfare and my children's.

IN THE WINTER OF 1993, MY MOTHER phoned me from a hospital room in Chicago. She sounded dazed. When I called her regular doctor, he told me that she had blacked out and fallen on the pavement several nights before and had suffered a concussion. He assured me that she would soon resume her normal widow's life of friends and volunteer work. Still worried, I decided to go to Chicago to see her. When I arrived the next week, she had been transferred to the renowned Chicago Rehabilitation Institute.

HER DOCTOR THERE PULLED ME aside and told me that my mother was no longer capable of living by herself. She couldn't walk fifty feet unaided without falling, and her mental capacities had deteriorated to such an extent that she couldn't balance a checkbook. I was completely taken aback—several months before she had seemed fine—but when I went to her apartment that night, I discovered ample confirmation of what the doctor had said. My mother had always been the most fastidious and organized of people—a wet ring left on her coffee table by a glass could drive her to distraction. Now, though, her apartment looked like a bag lady's, with unopened bills and magazines still in their subscription wrappers piled on the floor and strewn over chairs.

AS MY MOTHER'S ONLY CHILD, I WAS now suddenly responsible for her. My wife and I decided she should move to an "assisted care facility" in Maryland near us, where we could visit and watch out for her. But when I told her what the doctor said and what we thought she should do, she was adamantly opposed. "I don't care what that girl says," she exclaimed, referring to the doctor. To the end, my mother never understood that she had lost her capacities. She insisted she could walk perfectly. Although she had trouble reading get-well cards, she insisted she could manage her own affairs. But after several weeks of bitter argument she finally gave in, partly because she had no choice, but also because she fell again at the hospital and went through another spell of not knowing where or who she was.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, SHE continued to rage against her fate and sometimes me. Like many older people who lose their independence, she became obsessed with her money and possessions. While she never accused me or my wife of stealing from her, she believed everyone else around her was. Knowing that I was worried about her finances, she would taunt me by threatening to go on a shopping spree at Tiffany's. She became increasingly confused about who exactly I was. She knew my name and could give a capsule summary of my life, but as I became her guardian, rather than vice versa, she seemed unsure about what our relationship was. She would tell me about "our son John," as if I were my father. One day she asked me when she was going to meet "my new wife," as if I had ditched her for my current wife. When I called doctors or administrators, I'd have to stop myself from saying I was "Ruth Judis's father" rather than her son.



I DISCOVERED THAT EVEN DOCtors who treat the elderly often have little sensitivity to illnesses like the one my mother suffered. Before her concussion, my mother told me she had complained to her internist in Chicago of weakness and fainting spells; he told her she was depressed and prescribed Prozac. Her first doctor in Maryland could never understand my mother's status, which initially lay somewhere between full independence and a nursing home. Both of these doctors refused to accept "Medicare assignment"—they charged more than standard Medicare rates—and her doctor in Chicago insisted my mother fill out her own forms. Both doctors dropped my mother as a patient when she was no longer able to visit their offices. In fact, the only doctors who seemed to understand her condition were geriatric specialists attached to institutions: her doctor at Chicago Rehabilitation and the head of medicine at the Allegis Nursing Home in Kensington, Maryland, where she was transferred in November 1994 after a severe stroke left her paralyzed on one side.

WHEN THE REPUBLICANS TOOK over Congress after the 1994 elections, I had a few guarded hopes. I gave those up pretty quickly during the debates over Medicare and Medicaid funding. As I discovered, about 40 percent of the money Medicaid spends is for elderly nursing home inhabitants who exhaust their life's savings. Where I live, the average nursing home costs about $50,000 a year. And that doesn't include doctor bills, Medigap insurance, and whatever else a resident might need. (My mother's wheelchair cost over $1,000.) At that rate, even an upper-middle class family would soon exhaust its savings.

MANY NURSING HOMES (LIKE THE Manor Care near me, whose parent company's CEO is a prominent Montgomery County Democrat) won't accept Medicaid patients at all. Some, like Allegis, do and even make an effort not to segregate the two kinds of residents. In their first budget, Newt Gingrich's new Republican majority proposed reducing projected Medicaid spending by 20 percent over seven years. That would have led nursing homes to raise fees for non-Medicaid patients and reduce the quality of care for those on Medicaid. Even worse, from my standpoint, the Republicans proposed allowing states to begin requiring the families of nursing home residents to pay part of their costs. I found myself lying in bed at night trying to calculate how—when my mother's money ran out in four or five years—I could possibly begin sending my two daughters to college and also pay for her nursing home care. After my congresswoman, Connie Morella, backed the first Gingrich budget, I wrote her that I would never vote for her again. Evidently, a lot of other people got as upset as I did; the Republicans eventually dropped their plan to get the children of senior citizens to pay, and they exempted Medicaid from their welfare bill.

THIS JULY MY MOTHER SUFFERED a final stroke that left her without speech and seemed to rob her of any remaining incentive to live. Like many elderly people, she had already made it clear to her doctor that she would not want any extraordinary measures taken to keep her alive. She died about a month later. I plan to take her ashes back to Chicago, but they sit now in my backyard, a reminder of the difficult and unhappy days she and I endured over the last three years.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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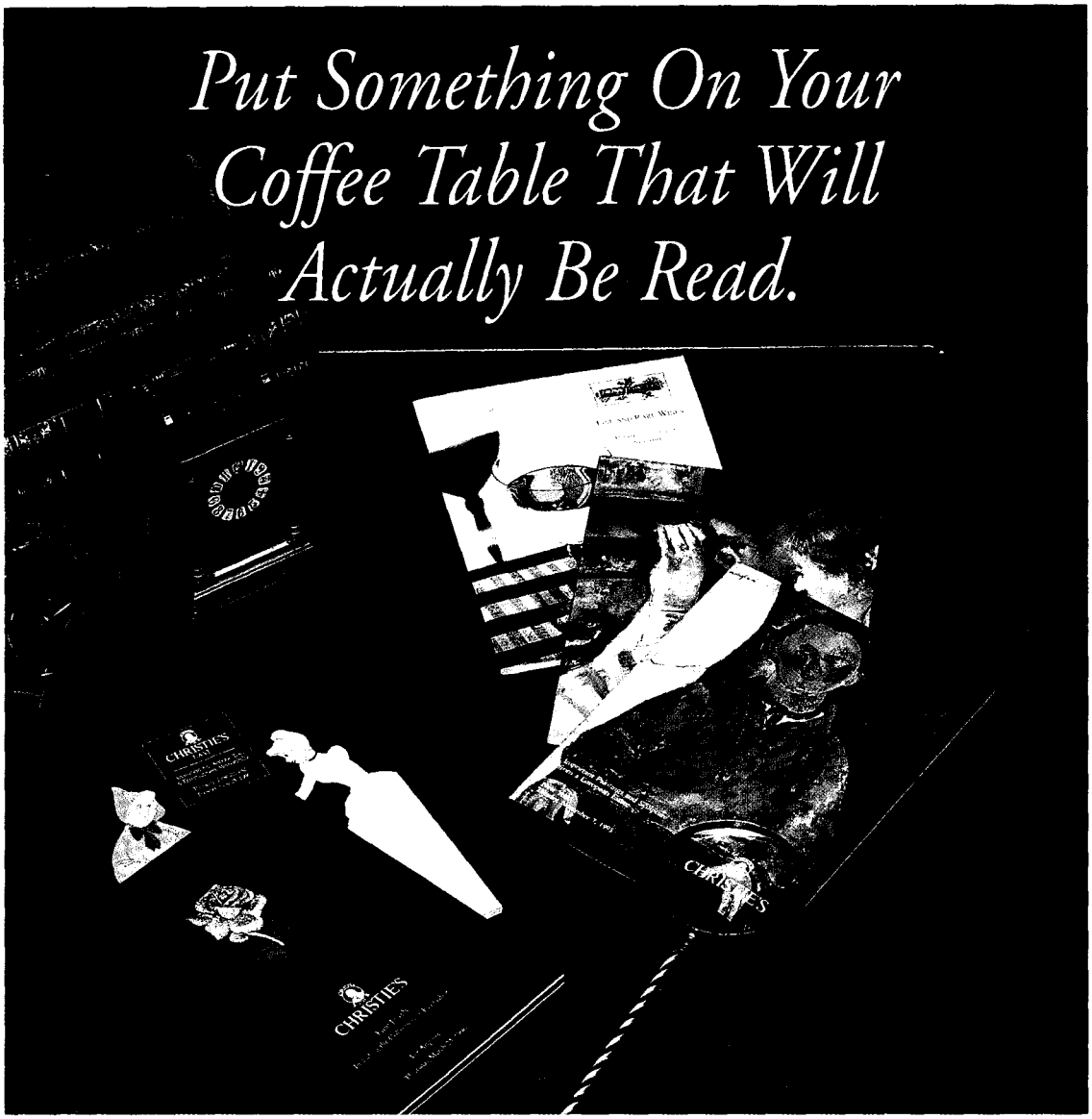

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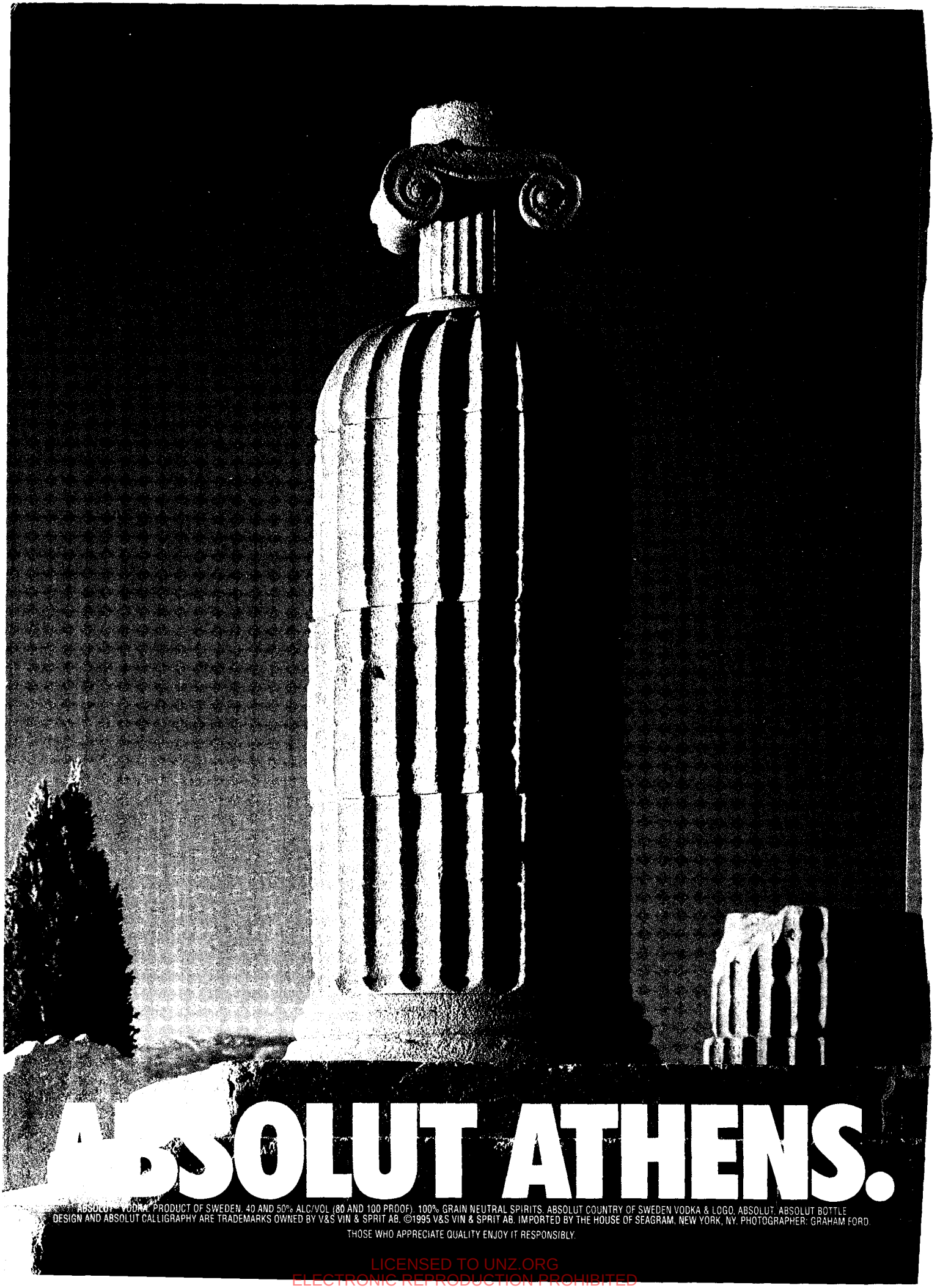

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